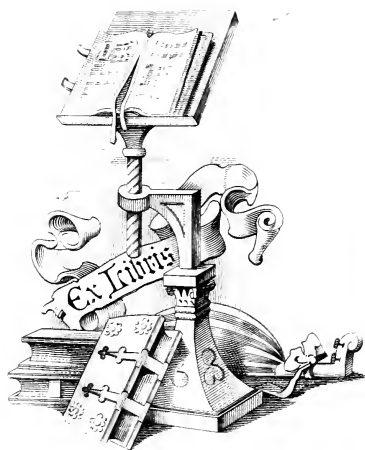


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THE

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN WAR.

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THE



Germany

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN WAR.

BY

EDWARD DICEY,

AUTHOR OF "ROME IN 1860,"

AND LATE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF "THE DAILY TELEGRAPH."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

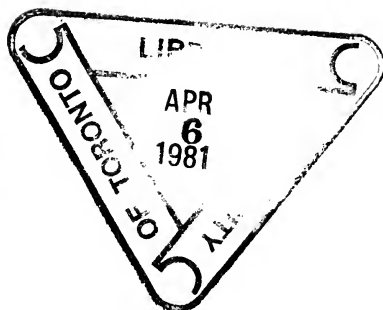


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THE

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN WAR.

March 22.

NOT having a classical dictionary at hand, I cannot say whether the Ides of March are really past ; but I know that, metaphorically, they may safely be said to “ have come and gone.” The sixty-seventh anniversary of the birth of his Majesty Frederick William Louis, King of Prussia, has passed over without becoming memorable in history as the anniversary also of a great German victory. The disgrace of the campaign of 1848-50 has not yet been wiped out in Danish blood ; and the island of Alsen still remains disunited from Schleswig. In fact, the long-promised attack on Dybbol is adjourned till further notice ; and when

the time is to come, if at all, is a problem that we in Sonderborg shall be the last persons in the world to solve. If the firing had ceased altogether, I should be disposed to attach additional faith to the various rumours of diplomatic negotiations for an armistice which are floating about the town. Unfortunately, it is difficult to reconcile this belief with the fact that the Prussian fire has been more brisk to-day than it has been since Thursday last, though the real result of the bombardment has been no greater than usual. From day to day it is most difficult to judge of the march of events, or of the progress of the siege. It is only by looking back over an interval of time that you can form any fair impression of the advance that has been made. Since the retreat of the Danes from the Dannewerke, there have been four distinct stages in the invasion of the Duchies. The four events which mark the intervals between these stages are—the entry into Flensburg, the occupation of Broagerland, the inroad into Jutland, and the capture of Avn-Bierg and Dybbol. The periods between each of these events have been unaccountably long, and, according to the same law, a long

interval ought to elapse between the capture of Avn-Bierg and the next decisive step against Dybbol. Each one of these steps appears to have been taken reluctantly, as if it had been delayed as long as possible; and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the allied Powers—for causes which I do not profess to divine—are not anxious to push on the war at all costs and sacrifices. After all, the Germans have done next to nothing hitherto except drive the Danes before them by sheer weight of men and metal. They have overrun the peninsula as far north as Hobroe, if not further still; they have engaged in a few skirmishes of doubtful issue, of which one alone, that of Oversoe, can by any pretence be called a battle; and they have fired a few shells without result. This is all that has been yet done. The two strongholds of the Danes, Fredericia and Alsen, remain unassailed, and, as far as any immediate operations are concerned, seem less likely to be taken now than they did six weeks ago. It is just a week since the Prussians opened fire upon the Dybbol heights from the batteries on the Wemming Bund. If they go on at their present rate, there is no reason why the siege should not

last as long as that of Troy. The whole brunt of the enemy's fire has been borne by battery No. 2, which lies near the southern extremity of Dybbol Hill. Why this battery should have been selected is not easily to be understood. There is no question that the left is by nature the weakest portion of the Danish line, and the one most exposed to the fire of an enemy advancing from Broagerland. But if the object of the Prussians is to silence the batteries on the left flank, and then to force their way along the comparatively low neck of land on which these works stand, why is it that battery No. 1, the one next to the sea, is left comparatively unmolested? If there were any immediate purpose even of silencing the particular battery which is thus selected as a target for the Prussian artillery, how is it that no continuous fire is kept up, but that the enemy contents himself with sending a dozen shots or so in quick succession, and then ceases firing for two or three hours till the Danes have time to repair whatever injury the shells may have occasioned? As it is, I can fairly say that hitherto the Prussians have made no valid progress towards the avowed object of their attack. We have had an artillery duel,

and that is all, though it is doubtful whether the term duel can be fairly applied to a contest where one combatant only fires at rare intervals, and the other never fires at all. Happily, the casualties have so far been few in number. The somewhat impressive and apathetic character of the Danish soldiers enables them to stand fire with singular coolness; and the risk from shells in the open air is not considerable if the men exposed to them are collected enough to seek at once the shelter of the earthworks. Though the soldiers working on the batteries of the contending armies are within easy range of each other, there has been but little rifle-shooting on either side; and therefore the bombardment has hitherto been a very bloodless one. Still, that this is the case is no merit of the Prussians. Every shell fired may produce the same loss of life as that occasioned by the one which fell into the block-house of battery No. 2. However, if the Prussians wish to do anything more than harass the Danes and cause the death of a few hundred men, they must pursue a different policy from that which they have adopted up to the birthday of their warlike King.

So much for speculation on the aspect of mili-

tary affairs. Of actual events my budget is singularly barren. Every excitement fades after a time, and even the process of being shelled soon loses its first novelty. We—confining the plural pronoun to those who are mere lookers-on, like myself—feel ourselves personally aggrieved if any long interval passes without a shot being fired. I remember once being in a theatre where the curtain remained down between the acts for an unusually long time. A lad near me in the pit signified his disapprobation by stamping and shouting loudly. An old gentleman on the next bench turned round and asked the malcontent sternly whether he was not aware that the actors were a great deal more anxious to get the play over than he could possibly be himself. “Yes, sir,” was the answer; “but then you see they are paid for their evening, and I pay for mine.” Now I feel very much in the position of my turbulent acquaintance. Prussian and Danish soldiers would be most heartily glad to have the battle over; but then, after all, it is their business to fight; and in some form or other they are paid for it. But I am only a spectator, and have a right, therefore, to grumble if things do not go on as rapidly and as

smoothly as I was led to expect by the promises of the programme. I am aware that any exhibition of impatience must seem singularly brutal to my friends and entertainers here. The country lady who told George IV. "that the only thing she still wished to see in London was a Royal coronation," was not guilty of a greater breach of delicate consideration than I should be if I expressed a desire that the bombardment might begin. Nothing, however, I think, could disturb the good-nature or alter the civility of these kindly Danes. To many persons I am acquainted with here the capture of Alsen by the Germans means not only national humiliation, but personal ruin. In the event of a successful attack, their houses will be burnt down, their prospects in life destroyed, their families in all likelihood driven into exile; yet, from the calmness with which they discuss the subject, you would scarcely suppose that they were more nearly interested in the issue than I am myself; and this outward indifference, though due in part to an almost English sense of dignity and pride, is, I think, chiefly caused by the wonderful easiness of the national temperament. At this very moment, when the town is being besieged, and when the

enemy's outposts are not a mile away, there are German-speaking persons residing in Sonderborg, whose sympathies are known to be rather with the invaders than the invaded. Yet nobody dreams of molesting them. I have no reason whatever to suppose that these persons carry on any communication with the enemy, and I have little doubt the military authorities have reason to know that they do not ; but still there is hardly another country in the world where popular feeling in such an hour would tolerate the presence of men whose wishes are in favour of an enemy so bitterly detested. Much in the same way, I am daily astonished at the extraordinary courtesy with which our countrymen—or, indeed, strangers of any kind—are received. Correspondents like myself have some small return to offer for the kindness shown us ; moreover, it is conceivable that the Danes may be gratified by the English interest in their concerns exhibited by the mere fact of our presence. But, in addition to regular correspondents, we have had of late batches of English lookers-on—gentlemen estimable in private life, but whom not even a foreigner could suppose to have any political influence or power ; yet these

stray strangers, sometimes unprovided with any recommendation except their English looks and dress, are furnished with passes, billeted—if they have courage enough to ask for the favour—about the town, and given every facility which they could possibly desire. They wander about the works at unseasonable hours, astonish the natives with elaborate costumes after the fashion of the Alpine Club, ask unintelligible questions of everybody they meet, perplex the mind of sentries, and drive waiters to distraction; and yet they are treated as civilly as if they were bearers of the intelligence that England was coming to the aid of Denmark in a week.

March 23.

Yesterday, after all, was not destined to pass over without a sensation. It was getting dusk, when a rumour spread that the King of Denmark had arrived at Hörup harbour, the little port where all vessels to Sonderborg are now obliged to cast anchor. The royal visit was utterly unexpected, so much so that even the military and civil authorities of the town had no news of it

until an hour beforehand. A number of open "chars-à-banc" were despatched in hot haste, and, about eight o'clock, as I happened to be strolling up the High Street, I came upon the royal procession. Except that the cars were filled with officers, I should have taken the "cortége" for a party of Alsen farmers coming into the town. Of show, or military escort, there was absolutely nothing. It was a lovely moonlight night, though the air was as cold as a hard, clear frost could make it, and the occupants of the Royal carriages looked tired and chilled. The hind seat of the first of the cars was occupied by the King and General Gerlach, while the front seat was filled by a peasant, who acted as driver, and a gigantic chasseur, with a cocked hat and plume, whom most of the few spectators about the streets took, I fancy, for the sovereign. No enthusiasm of any kind was displayed, and not a cheer could be heard; but then hardly anybody was aware of the King's coming, and his face is not yet well enough known in those parts to insure his immediate recognition. The Royal party drove through the town, almost without stopping, and passed over the pontoon bridge up to Dybbol. There the King

was shown over the works, and visited those batteries which have suffered most severely. According to a report current here, a shell fell during the drive in unpleasant proximity to his Majesty. I have no reason to be sceptical about this story, except that I have invariably observed that, whenever crowned personages go anywhere near the scene of action, some remarkable incident of this kind is certain to occur for their especial benefit. Granted the fact, however, I am perfectly willing to endorse the truth of the accompanying report; that the King was delighted at the occurrence. Not even the bitterest political opponents of Christian IX. question his personal bravery. And, if the gallant equerry—whose name we used to laugh so much about in London, when we read in the “Court Journal” during the period of the Prince of Wales’s marriage that his Royal Highness Prince Christian was attended by Lieutenant Funck—was in the party, I have no doubt that he also vindicated the truth of the saying, “What’s in a name?” After visiting the works the King and his suite returned to Hörup-Haf, where they slept on board the Royal yacht. This morning his Majesty went over to Augustenburg to see the

hospitals, and has been in Sonderborg this afternoon paying visits to the principal personages of the town. I was seated at the dinner-table of my host, in company with a number of officers who are sheltered in the same hospitable mansion as myself, when a knock was heard at the door, and the King walked in unannounced, accompanied by a single equerry. We all rose in a hurry, and his Majesty, after bowing very courteously in return for our salutations, was shown by our host into the only vacant room in the house; from which the King made his exit, after a short conversation, by passing through an adjoining bedroom, encumbered with trunks and packages, over which he climbed laughingly. He looked a good deal older and more careworn than he appeared, according to my recollection, when his face was familiar to all London sight-seers. But he had still that kindly good-natured smile which redeems a face in itself somewhat void of expression. A crowd had collected round the doors, and gave his Majesty a hearty cheer on his departure. It is an easy thing, doubtless, for a sovereign to create a favourable impression if he seeks to do so; but still it is only fair to say that everybody who

comes across the path of Christian IX. gives but one report as to the attractiveness of his manner. The Royal visit is not likely to be a long one; and it is expected the King will take his departure to-night.

This glimpse of royalty is not, however, the sensation to which I alluded at the head of this letter—at least, not directly so. The one absorbing military question of the moment is whether the Germans are going to attack Dybbøl; the corresponding one amongst civilians is whether the enemy will bombard Sonderborg. All the crowned heads in Europe might visit us without exciting much attention, unless their coming influenced the bearing of these two questions. Shells are no respecters of persons; and, with the sound of cannon all day long dinning in our ears, we are not very curious about who comes or goes here, however exalted may be his rank. Our great “sensation” was a report, founded on the King’s coming, that an armistice had been agreed to. The advocates of this hypothesis had a great deal to say for themselves. Why the King should have come thus unexpectedly, at an hour’s notice, on the very day the grand onslaught of the enemy

had been looked for, is a problem to which nobody has been able to find the clue. The papers which arrived by last night's mail brought us telegrams from London and Vienna, announcing that an armistice was considered increasingly probable. Moreover, strange to say, at about two o'clock yesterday the enemy's fire ceased suddenly, and till ten this morning we had a complete respite, with the exception of the one shell which fell so near the royal carriage, the noise of whose explosion happened not to reach the town. When it was discovered in the morning that sailing vessels had actually re-entered the port of Sonderborg, which had been deserted since the beginning of the bombardment, it seemed certain that something must have occurred to suspend operations; and I was beginning to look forward confidently to a visit to Copenhagen, and the almost forgotten luxury of clean linen, when our dreams of peace were shaken by a vigorous recommencement of the bombardment from the Wemming Bunde batteries. All day, up to the hour at which I write, the fire has continued with unexampled briskness, and with much shorter intervals of quiet than we have hitherto been accustomed to.

The night before last two deserters came into our lines from the Prussian camp. They complained bitterly of the hardness of their fare, and of the sufferings they had had to undergo, and said that the Schleswig peasants had shown no sympathy whatever for their German liberators. The men were both half drunk, and the only reason they assigned for their desertion was a reluctance to kill their fellow-men. One of them hiccuped out his view of the question with a comic gravity in words which I give as nearly as they will bear translation. "I was born, you know, without Schleswig-Holstein; I have lived without Schleswig-Holstein; and may the d—— take me if I see why I should die for Schleswig-Holstein." Whether from ignorance, or from some faint remnant of honour, these two scampish philosophers professed themselves unable to give any information about the movements or numbers of the Prussian army. "Nobody ever tells us poor devils anything," was the answer they gave to every question.

The Danish Government, with its usual frankness, has just published a statement of the Danish losses since the bombardment commenced. On

the seventeenth day, when the Prussians captured Avn-Bierg, the loss was 300; while the total in killed, wounded, and missing, during the last week, has been double that number. The Prussian statement that on Thursday they did not lose 100 is received here with great incredulity, as several of the Danish shells were seen to fall in the middle of dense columns of men.

March 24.

The war, I am glad to say, is assuming a less sanguinary character than it bore at the first outset. The soldiers, on either side, have got tired of killing for killing's sake, and the rifle duels, which used to take place at every change of outposts, occur no longer. The lines of the two armies are now so close that the sentries can exchange words; and though the German soldiers speak no Danish, yet almost all the Danes can speak a few words of German. Friendly salutations are exchanged, and sometimes, I fancy, when officers are out of the way, the brandy flasks are passed to and fro from Dane to German. In consequence a visit to the outposts is not now attended

with any especial danger, so I availed myself of a temporary respite in the bombardment this morning to go round the extreme lines occupied by the Danish army in the Sundevad. The area of King Christian's possessions on the mainland of Schleswig is now reduced to miserably small dimensions; and if the ground were clear and the path straight, a fast walker might easily walk all round this portion of his dominions in an hour. As I have often mentioned to you before, the position of Dybbol is nothing but a sugar-loaf sort of hill surrounded on three sides by the sea. The area of the base can be little above a square mile, and the broadest side of the irregular quadrilateral on which it stands—that stretching at the foot, from the Als Sund to the Wemming Bund—is about a mile and one-third in length. I started from Battery No. 10, which stands close to the edge of the Sund; and five minutes' walk along the road to Aapenraa took me to the furthest sentry post on the Danish side. From there I had to turn to the left, and skirt the foot of the hill, directly under the Danish batteries, keeping always three or four hundred yards away from the hill. Every fifty yards or so along this line there was a rifle-pit,

occupied by Danish troops. Two sentries at each were leaning upon the high bank of earth raised as a breastwork, with their rifles pointed across the mound, ready to fire at once in the event of an alarm. In the trench at the foot of the breastwork, out of which the earth had been dug, some ten soldiers lay sleeping or smoking. Behind every hedge and under every available slope of the ground troops were stationed; and the whole country was dotted over with these little knots of soldiers, looking for all the world as if they had come out for a day's picnic. The Prussian line of sentries is not exactly parallel to the Danish. At the two extremities of the Danish cordon the Prussian outposts are full half a mile away; but near the high-road, which, as I have before stated, bisects Dybbol-hill, the Germans are so close at hand that I could distinguish their uniforms. As far as I could gather with my field-glass, the enemy's advance posts are stationed along a line not far short of three miles in length. Commencing at Sand-Bierg, on the Prussian left, then passing through Rageböl and Dybbol villages, and terminating beyond Avn-Bierg on the Wemming-Bund, our road was a very broken one, as we had

to make our way across hedges and ditches, and over the ruins of farm-yards and gardens, and were naturally anxious to keep some prominent object between ourselves and the enemy's sentries, in case they should be tempted, by the unusual appearance of any one in civilian's dress at the outposts, to do us the honour of sending a bullet whizzing past our ears. There were traces enough of the recent skirmishes in the ground over which we trod, and, if I had chosen, I might have carried away a boxful of broken bits of shells and bullets, and splinters. However, the only memorable trophy that I saw was a shell which had not exploded, and which was liable to the fatal objection that it might go off without a moment's notice. We had nearly accomplished our journey when, as we approached the most exposed part of our walk, the enemy began to fire at the batteries, towering above our heads. Unless for some unaccountable reason they had chosen to fire at the foot instead of at the crest of Dybbol-hill, we were in perfect safety, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the shells flying over our heads, and throwing up a perfect shower of dirt whenever they hit the earthworks of the Danish batteries. Nothing

would satisfy two young Englishmen in our party but rushing incontinently up the exposed side of the hill, in order to get inside the battery, which was then being shelled. I am certainly older than my friends, and, I trust, in this instance wiser; and, whatever form of death may be reserved for me, I never intend to allow my acquaintance the chance of saying, after I am dead, that I was a fool for getting killed. So I quietly gave the battery in question a wide berth, and made my way back to the camp under shelter of a friendly hill.

Going home, I met the one victim of the twenty shells or so I had just seen fired with unusual accuracy at the battery which the Prussians have tried so long in vain to silence. A poor Danish soldier had been wounded by the splinters of a plank roofing struck down by one of these shells, and was being brought home just as I reached the camp. Four of his comrades were carrying him on one of the army stretchers; and every five steps they had to stop, in answer to his prayers. The man was dying. I have seen wounded men and hospitals enough, but of all battle sights the transport of the wounded from the front always

seems to me the saddest. A quarter of an hour ago, this man, I could not help thinking, was full of life and strength, and now he was stricken down to die in agony. If he had fallen thus for any object, in obedience to any military necessity, his fate would not have seemed to me so cruel; but he had been sacrificed solely to a wanton and purposeless act of destruction. All things, I know, are fair in war, and if the Germans believe that they can facilitate the capture of Alsen by laying the town of Sonderborg in ashes, and shelling every hut beneath which the Danes can find shelter or refuge, they are justified in so doing according to all ordinary rules of hostility; but I cannot see that this dropping fire upon the works of Dybbol, this intermittent discharge of shells without aim or purpose, can even be supposed to serve any practical purpose. It is incredible the Germans should be ignorant of the fact that their fire has hitherto done no damage to the security of the Dybbol position: it is absolutely impossible they should suppose that earthworks like those of the Danish intrenchments should ever be seriously affected by an irregular cannonade, interrupted daily for hours together, during which the Danes

have ample time allowed them to repair any damage that their fortifications may suffer. The one sole purpose that can be served by the sort of warfare the Germans are now carrying on is to sacrifice the lives of a few hundred brave men uselessly and wilfully. Conducted as it has been for the last week, the war is a cruel and cowardly one. At a safe distance, out of reach of the Danish artillery, the Prussians amuse themselves by firing off shells against the Dybbol works, when the humour takes them. If they like to commence a regular attack, well and good; but, in the name of humanity, there should be a stop to this desultory warfare.

March 26.

Yesterday, as I told you, was one of the quietest days we have had since the bombardment commenced. The night which followed was still with an almost deathlike stillness; the sky was overcast with low, hazy clouds, thick enough to shut out the light of the moon. Altogether, if ever there was a night which promised a respite from shells, a *relâche* of the pyrotechnic performance, it was that of yesterday. On this ground, I admit

frankly, I resolved to avail myself of an invitation often given me by an engineer officer of my acquaintance to visit the batteries by night. I am not a glutton after glory ; I am not, to use a Yankee colloquialism, "death" upon danger. If I can see what I want to see, without coming unpleasantly near to shells or musket-shot, I am heartily contented. The civilian volunteers, who come here daily as aspirants for commissions in the army, are sent out at once to the front, to show how they can stand fire. The rule is an excellent one, and has my hearty approbation, but I am not an aspirant after a commission in this or any other army in the world. It is no part of an amateur's duty to get killed or wounded, and I think that any amateur who suffered such a fate would richly deserve the verdict of "Serve him right," that the Duke of Wellington is said to have passed on the only paymaster in the British army who ever got killed in action. I make this statement in order to vindicate my character from any imputation of inconsistency with my professions to which the narrative of last night's adventures might expose me. In order to see the camp and the works by night—a sight which I felt sure was worth seeing

—I chose the safest occasion that I could find; and if my path and the orbit of a shell happened to intersect each other, it was the shell, I can truly say, which sought me, not I who sought the shell.

It was after ten when I left Sonderborg on my expedition. The streets were already empty, the houses were closed, and well-nigh everybody was in bed and asleep. The dark waters of the Als Sund stretched out in the dim half-light like an inky lake; and the reflection of the lamps along the quay only served to make the blackness of the unlit expanse deeper by the contrast. The sentinel at the entrance to the bridge tried in vain to read our cards by the light of a flickering lantern, and finally, giving up the job as hopeless, allowed us to pass with a feeble protest. So we proceeded across the long bridge of boats, beneath which the water rippled with a strange weird sound, and, climbing up the Dybbol hill, fell in with a Danish lad-soldier, toiling to the front beneath a heavy knapsack, who insisted upon accompanying us, not because he had any suspicion of our intentions, but because he felt lonely and wanted company. He was a boy almost in years, and complained greatly of the hardness of his life.

For days, he said, he had not changed his clothes ; night after night he was in the trenches, till five or six o'clock ; then he had a long trudge home, and by nine he had to be upon parade. And yet there was nothing of discontent about his complaints. It was all, he seemed to think, in the day's work. The inference that because there was something wrong, therefore there was somebody to blame, was one which apparently he had never thought of drawing. Whatever I have seen of discontent in the Danish army is thus always of a passive, not of an active, kind. Over-worked, out-numbered, and ill-sheltered, these Danish troops still plod on manfully at their daily work. without much, indeed, of spirit, but with absolutely no thought of giving in. Our volunteer companion found it hard work, laden as he was, to keep up with our quick step ; and so we soon left him behind in the darkness, and saw him no more. There was no need of any escort, when we had once passed the bridge, or, indeed, much necessity for any permission. I am now pretty well known by sight throughout the camp, and vigilance is not the strong point of the Danish army. If you walk boldly past a sentry, anywhere or at any time, the

chances are that he will hesitate about stopping you. Even in the dark night our party was allowed to pass on unchallenged. No pass-word is given out, and when a soldier has satisfied himself that the passer-by is not a person he ought to salute, he feels, I fancy, that he has done his duty. Sentry after sentry, wrapped up in his dark cloak, and looking in the dusk like a ghostly shadow, peered after us curiously as we went by, listened to the strange accents of our foreign tongue, and then walked back to his post, wrapping his cloak around him with renewed energy. Through the camp itself we made our way unnoticed. Not a sound was to be heard; the white tents and the long deal-plank sheds—where the soldiers lay trussed, as it were, together in the hay—stood out against the dark sky distinct and clear. Everything was as quiet as if the same fate had fallen upon the Danish camp as that which befel the one told of in the Bible, where, when the enemies of Israel rose up in the morning, they were “all dead men.”

Then we groped our way across fields and ditches over the broken upland lying between the camp and the batteries. Though I fancied I knew by this time every slope of the ground, yet

it was hard work to find the path in this labyrinth of forts and earthworks. It was only by steering so as to keep the Dybbol windmill on my right, and the calm dark waters of the Wemming Bund on my left, that I could make out whereabouts we were wandering. The line of the Broager shore, on which stand the Prussian batteries, lay like a black cloud on the horizon, and not even the keenest eye could have distinguished the spot where their guns were placed. Along our path we came on all sorts of strange, shadow-like groups. Sometimes we stumbled over a detachment of soldiers sleeping in the straw at the roadside, with their arms stacked beside them ready to advance at once, if the word of alarm were given. That any body of men could produce a sound by snoring in unison, so closely resembling the croak, croak of a chorus of Italian frogs, was a discovery I made then and there. Presently a relief party, with spades and pickaxes across their shoulders, instead of muskets, trudged slowly past us; next we were led out of our way by the smouldering embers of a camp fire, which every now and then flickered up with a dying flame, and threw a momentary light on the strange

uncanny scene. A train of empty waggons, which had brought earth to the front, flitted past us ; the ground over which we trod had been ploughed into great holes and furrows by the shower of shells which had fallen on it days before. Gangs of soldiers were working silently at trenches and breastworks, sturdily throwing up the clods, scarcely allowed to speak for fear of disturbing the attention of the sentries who stood motionless beside them, watching for the flash which foretells the coming of a shell ; and as we went by one of these trenches the alarm was given, the workmen scattered out of sight behind mounds and hedges like rabbits running into a warren, and the field seemed in a moment tenantless ; but the alarm proved groundless, the men went back to their work, and all remained still and tranquil along the Prussian line.

Battery No. 2, the one which has suffered most severely from the bombardment, was the destination to which we were bound ; but nobody we met knew its whereabouts. The common soldiers in the Danish army know, if possible, even less than English troops of anything connected with the war in which they are not actually concerned ;

and I might as well have asked for the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as for the number of the different batteries. The proportion of officers is so small in the Danish forces, that large patrols and working parties are frequently under the orders of a corporal; and, at any rate, I could find nobody to show me the way. However, by trying battery after battery, in all of which, let me say, our party was received with the utmost courtesy, and the most unbounded confidence, I stumbled at last on the object of my search after an hour's wandering. It is a strange spectacle, a battery by night. You cross a deep trench, surmounted with palisades; go through a narrow stockaded entrance, and find yourselves in an enclosure, more like a sawyer's sand-pit, magnified twenty-fold, than any other object I can call to mind. Great banks of sloping earth rise up on every side of you; the guns are pointed, with the gunners standing by them; at each embrasure the watchmen are stationed on the look-out for shells; groups of men are working hastily, throwing up fresh piles of earth over the rent and battered banks of the powder-magazines and block-houses. On the ground there is a quaint

confusion of broken planks, cannon-balls, powder-bags, spades, and muskets, everything being doubtless in its place for those who know where to look, though to a stranger the scene seems one of chaotic disorder. Beneath the shelter of the earth-banks scores of soldiers lay sleeping, curled up in their cloaks, or covered over with empty bags. No talking was allowed, and the men who were at work scarcely made more noise than those who slept. Of the injuries the battery had received in that day's fire it would not be proper for me to speak; it is enough to say that, whatever they were, they were being promptly and completely repaired. We had walked all round the forts, had been told the calibre of all the cannon, and had had the damage caused by that day's shelling pointed out to us, and were about to leave, waiting to light our cigars till we had got clear of the powder magazine; when suddenly it seemed as if an electric thrill ran through everybody, and we heard the shrill cry, "Deck! deck!" In a moment there was a stampede for safety. There was no time for courtesy or precedence. Hurry scurry, we all flew to the shelter of the sloping banks. Some of us rolled over on the

ground, some jumped on the sleeping men, who woke up, fancying they had been struck by a shell; but, one way or another, on all-fours, or flat upon the ground, the whole party got under cover. Ten seconds, I am told, is the calculated time between the departure of a shell from Broagerland and its arrival at Dybbol. I know if this be the case that a vast amount of mental action can be crowded into a particularly short period. I had first to realise that a shell was coming; then, as I had got my back the wrong way, to turn round and look which side of the fort I ought to go to; then to see that the path was clear; and finally to crouch under the slope of the bank, squeezing as close into it as the resistance of matter would allow; and yet, after this, I know I had time to think the shell was very long in coming—to recollect a similar incident which had occurred to me at the siege of Gaëta, when a clergyman, who happened to be in my company, opened his umbrella with the view of breaking the force of the missile—and to speculate on the consideration, if two hundred and thirty shells had been fired the day before without hurting anybody, what were the chances against

this particular shell hitting my individual self. The calculation was proceeding in a decidedly unsatisfactory manner, when I caught the strange, cutting whirr of the shell, as it came flying towards us. I know it appeared to take an unusually protracted time in getting near. Then the whirr grew louder and louder, close above our heads. I glanced involuntarily upwards, and saw the shell strike the roof of the block-house some dozen feet beyond our shelter; then there was a flash, followed by a dull crash, as it struck and burst. A shower of earth was thrown up into the sky, and fell down over our heads and shoulders. All was over; after a moment's pause the soldiers got up, shook the dirt off their clothes, and set to work stacking up the earth which the shell had scattered down.

Thus ended my experience of shelling, or rather of being shelled in a battery. It was one I was not sorry to have made, but which I felt no inclination to repeat. As to any exhibition of personal courage or the contrary, I saw scarce any occasion or opportunity for it. When once you hear the shell coming, there is nothing more to be done, unless you are goose enough to shriek or scream. You

can hardly show that you are afraid ; unless you are ass enough to jump up on the batteries and wave your cap, you will find it as hard to show that you are not afraid. Practically, if you keep your eyes about you, and have nothing to hinder you from seeking shelter at once, the risk, I take it, is very small, and one that no reasonable man would object to run if he had any special object in so doing. In spite, however, of all the calculations in the world, the sensation of hearing a shell whirring towards you is not, pleasant to my fancy. The Prussians, so I learnt from the officer who kindly showed me over the works, have been lately in the habit of throwing a shell regularly every two or three hours during the night, and the one with which we were favoured was the regular midnight allowance. These nocturnal projectiles are always aimed at the interior of the batteries ; and if that in question was a fair sample, they are directed with remarkable precision. So we strolled homeward through the sleeping camp, and our party seemed to me to talk a good deal more cheerfully when the crest of Dybbol Hill lay between us and the Prussian batteries. Not a soul was stirring, and the sound

of our steps and voices, as we tramped through the deserted streets, must, I fear, have disturbed the slumbers of many a burgher of Sonderborg.

March 27.

It is worth while to say something about the very important question what the Danes have done, or have not done, hitherto—what sacrifices and what efforts the nation is making or prepared to make in behalf of its national independence and the integrity of the monarchy. Let me remark in starting, that an immense deal of twaddle is always talked about the exertions that nations can make in modern days, in defence of their country. In semi-barbarous times, when every man was more or less a soldier, and when people hung much more loosely than they do now to their homes or occupations, it was possible for a *levée en masse* of a population to occur in fact, as well as in fiction. Such a thing is not possible with the complicated wants of modern civilization; and, even in the most critical moments, all a nation can do is to spare an unusual proportion of her citizens and her treasure for the purposes of war. Men must be left for agriculture, railroads,

shipping, commerce, and all the hundred demands of civilized society. Now, according to any reasonable calculation, Denmark has made a great if not an overwhelming effort. By the last published census the population of Denmark proper was one million six hundred thousand in round numbers, and that of the Duchies nearly one million. In a population of this amount the number of men capable of bearing arms would certainly not be over four hundred thousand. Now the total of the Danish army is estimated at some 50,000; and though I believe there has never been in the field anything like that amount by 10,000 at the very least, yet, when you make allowance for the immense number of non-effectives, of men scattered about in the little island garrisons, of soldiers on leave and in the hospitals, I think it possible that 50,000 men, or one out of every eight capable of bearing arms, has been taken from his ordinary pursuits to serve in the army; and in estimating the magnitude of this effort, it should be remembered that, for all military purposes, Lauenburg, Holstein, Schleswig, and the greater part of Jutland, are detached for the moment from Denmark. The Danish forces, there-

fore, have to be recruited from a population of little more than one million; so that the ratio of men in arms to men capable of bearing arms in the actual dominions of King Christian is close upon one to five. Already great difficulties are found in getting labour to till the fields, and a prolonged continuance of the present effort would soon exhaust the country. If the common calculation is correct, the expense of this army is not less than 50,000 specie-dollars, or £11,200 a day—a sum which has now to be raised exclusively by the insular possessions of the monarchy. In ordinary times the total receipts for Denmark proper, including Jutland, were about four millions of specie-dollars, or £900,000 per annum; and therefore, at the present rate, the yearly expenditure of the country has been increased, speaking roughly, from one to five millions—a proportion as great, relatively to the resources of the country, as if our annual budget were raised from seventy to three hundred and seventy-five millions.

As far, therefore, as the State is concerned, I do not think any impartial person could expect Denmark to have done more than she has hitherto done. Every effort of the Government has been

supported by the voice of the country ; and, with the exception of a small section of the party called the Friends of the Peasants, there is no political faction which is even supposed to favour pacific views. On the other hand, I do not see much evidence of intense individual enthusiasm, as distinguished from what may be called official and professional patriotism. It is very hard to judge of a foreign nation, especially of one which is eminently undemonstrative in its character. I do not think, however, that the popular excitement is anything like that which would spring up in England in case Ireland were occupied by a foreign enemy, or even like that which I saw in America at the commencement of the Secession war. The existence of a general conscription paralyses the power of volunteering ; but still it is strange to me how little there is of any individual action. Take this town for instance, whose defence is a point of national honour as well as strategical importance. There are hundreds of able-bodied young men about the shops and farmhouses, yet the very idea of a volunteer guard has never been entertained. It may be said with some truth that Alsen is more or less impregnated with a German

element ; but even in the island towns which I have visited, where the population is wholly and exclusively Danish, there is no ardent enthusiasm outwardly visible about the campaign. Let me not be misunderstood as saying that the war is not popular in Denmark. All I mean to assert is, that I do not believe there yet exists in Denmark such a state of feeling as would make man, woman, and child ready for any sacrifice sooner than submit to the dismemberment of the country. As far as we can learn, it is only in the north of Jutland that the enemy has found his progress thwarted by the bitter personal animosity of the population. If Fünen or Zealand were to be invaded, this, I have no doubt, would be the case also, only to a far stronger degree ; but, so long as the war is confined to the southern peninsula, I think the resistance the Germans will meet—and have met—is that of a nation fighting gallantly, most gallantly, for its honour, not of a people struggling desperately for its very existence. So, in the same way, I feel confident that the Danish troops will fight on dauntlessly in defence of Alsen or Fredericia as long as there is any reasonable hope of holding their ground, but I question their

fighting on with the recklessness of despair when all hope seems gone.

The causes of such a condition of the public mind are intelligible enough. The sense of their own weakness operates very powerfully upon the Danes. They know only too well that, if Germany hold firm in her purpose, and the Western Powers continue firm to their want of purpose, the ultimate issue of the contest is beyond a doubt. Denmark knows that her only real chance of escape from her foes lies in some Continental complication, or some foreign aid. Men of education and cool brain may see that the possibility of such an occurrence has not disappeared, but the masses of the nation are growing hopeless by long waiting. The constant sickening expectation of some sudden turn of fortune is enough to wear out in some measure the ardour of the boldest of nations, and even the knowledge that all hope must be abandoned would prove less dispiriting than this state of prolonged suspense. Moreover, Denmark labours under the fatal disadvantage, in a foreign war, of not being a homogeneous nation. Leaving her differences of race and language out of the question, her geographical position is alone suffi-

cient to create a divergence of interests between the various members of her disjointed dominions. An universal dislike of foreign domination is the one common feeling actuating all parts of the Danish monarchy; but, otherwise, I should question any one of her provinces having exactly the same sentiments with regard to the war. A country made up of islands and peninsulas has not one patent and uniform national unity like that which pervades France and England. The Danes of Alsen, though bitterly hostile to the Germans, wish to share the fortunes of the mainland, whatever they may be. "I am not only a Dane," a gentleman residing here, who hates the very name of a German, said to me the other day; "I am a Danish Schleswiger, and am bound to look to the interests of Schleswig as well as those of Denmark." So also Zealand, which lies close to Sweden, would probably be much more in favour of a Scandinavian union than Fünen, which lies scores of miles away from the Swedish coast. Fünen itself must feel that the possession of Fredericia by a foreign Power would be so disastrous to its safety and independence, that the retention of Jutland by the Danes

would be cheaply purchased by the loss, if it must be, of Schleswig and Alsen. Jutland, again, has a much closer personal interest in keeping the peninsula under one government with herself than the Danish islands can possibly have. And so on. I am not saying for one moment that in each of the different provinces there exists a party with a distinct policy. I wish alone to show that the existence of these individual and contradictory interests necessarily impairs the force of Denmark in carrying on hostilities.

March 28.

At last the war has begun in earnest. What causes may have decided the Prussians to commit themselves finally to the task of capturing the works of Dybbol, it is useless now to consider. Speculations have given place to fact; and the sword is to cut the knot which diplomacy, hitherto, has failed to disentangle. *Alea jacta est*—the lot has been thrown for war; and now there is no alternative open for the Germans except to enter Alsen as conquerors, or to retire from before Dybbol baffled and defeated. To a spectator this change from the monotony of a

wearisome, purposeless bombardment to the brisk and rapid action of battle must needs be most welcome. And it is with sincere and heartfelt pleasure I have now to record the fact that the first onslaught of the besiegers has resulted in a decided victory for Denmark. Your opinions about the abstract rights or wrongs of this complicated struggle may be what you like; your views of the expediency of continuing the war may differ from those current amongst the Danes; but I defy any man with blood in his heart, or living, as I do, amongst this kindly, gallant people, not to wish them God-speed in their death-struggle against overwhelming numbers—not to be glad with their triumph and sad with their disasters.

It was raining hard when I went to bed last night. The firing throughout the afternoon and evening had been unusually slack. I had heard, indeed, on my usual walk about the camp, that an attack was expected in the night; but my informant himself told me he had no faith in the report, which he had heard so many scores of times, and always in vain. About half-past three this morning I was woke up by the noise of heavy

firing. The sound, however, has become so familiar to my ears, that I paid little attention to it, and lay dozing in my bed, speculating when the noise would cease. Gradually it struck me that the sound was not that to which I was accustomed. It seemed to me in my half-awake condition that the army-undertakers, who pursue their calling on the open space before my windows, had begun their dismal work earlier than usual, and were driving nails into the deal coffins with unusual energy. All of a sudden the truth dawned upon me that what I heard was the rattle of musketry. In a moment I was wide awake and at my window. There was short time for dressing, not to mention washing; but before I had hurried on my clothes, I heard the bugles sounding the shrill melancholy alarm-note through the town. Every door in the house appeared to slam at once, and I immediately heard the heavy tramp of troops moving down the street. Meanwhile the noise of the bombardment grew louder and louder, and whenever there was a momentary pause, the quick, sharp ringing of the rifle-shot was borne on by the wind, like a treble accompaniment to a deep-bass symphony. Outside

the house the spectacle offered was not one to be easily forgotten. The rain had been succeeded by a hard, clear frost; the moonlight shone placidly over the bay and the sleeping town, throwing the dark side of Dybbol Hill into deeper relief by the contrast between the silvery waters and the dull, dead earth. In the far east a pale white streak showed that the daylight was at hand. The Wemming Bund shores and the heights of Dybbol were enveloped in grey clouds of floating, shifting smoke. Soldiers were pouring out of every street and doorway. In front of every house facing the sea groups of people were collected, scanning eagerly the direction of the fire. Dark masses of infantry were marching across the bridge, and winding their way slowly up the steep hill-side. Out towards Hörup harbour the iron-clad "Rolf Krake" could be seen getting up her steam and drifting, almost imperceptibly, towards the Schleswig shore. The Wemming Bund batteries were silent: it was clear that the Prussians were moving up the hill, and that their guns had ceased fire for fear of mowing down the advancing columns. It was an anxious moment, I suspect, even for those

who felt most confident of the power of the besieged to hold good their ground. All eyes were turned wistfully toward the crest of the hill, with a dread that a dark close line might be seen rising slowly above the brow of the heights, whose outline stood out clear against the blue, starry sky, pressing the Danish troops before them by overwhelming numbers. But still the fire of the Dybbol batteries kept on shaking the earth on which we stood, and deafening us with a jarring din which overpowered the sound of musketry, and rendered the voices of the bystanders scarcely audible. Amidst the hurry and excitement, however, there was no confusion or disorder visible. Every regiment and every man knew his place, and the Danish troops marched forward stolidly, with a grim, stern look about their countenances, and no sound of any kind issuing from their tight-closed lips.

As soon as the night began to break I made my way through the town, and passed the bridge in company with a civilian attached to the army, who was a spectator like myself. The long steep road I have so often described was covered with detachments of troops trudging up to the front.

The camp was under arms; every battery and earthwork was manned; the cavalry was drawn up on the open "plateau" above the bridge, waiting silently for the order to advance. Under cover of the hill-slopes, batteries of field artillery were stationed, with the horses ready harnessed and mounted. Already waggons filled with straw were hurrying up to fetch back the wounded. If the Prussians were to succeed in carrying the heights by storm, it was evident that a bloody resistance awaited them on this side the hill; but still the Danish batteries kept pouring forth showers of shells in ceaseless succession, and we could catch the rapid volleys of musketry, coming quicker and quicker from our side, in answer to the advancing fire of the enemy. So the minutes passed on like hours in the fulness of their excitement. As daybreak grew nearer the air became cold and chill, and a grey fog of mist and smoke spread across the western sky. About five the fire grew slack for a time, and we thought that the attack was driven back, but no shell was fired from the Wemming Bund batteries; and till their fire opened, the retreat of the enemy could not be considered certain. The commander-in-

chief, surrounded by his staff, had taken up his position a few hundred yards below the windmill which stands upon the summit of Dybbol Hill. I could see, by the faces of the officers, that things, so far, were going well, and General Gerlach himself looked as bright and active as though the years which he could number were seventeen instead of seventy. I advanced along the "chaussée" until the sound of spent rifle-balls dropping over my head told me that I had come close enough to the scene of action; and then walked slowly down the hill. As I reached the bridge the fire broke forth again, in renewed and, if possible, increased fury. The whistling of shells, the crack of rifles, and the boom of cannon followed each other rapidly. The enemy was returning to the charge, making one more attempt to carry the heights by storm. In case the attempt should prove successful, or the result appear even doubtful, I knew that the Danish reserves would be pushed up at once; so I took my station on one of the Sonderborg batteries, which commands a perfect view of the whole eastern hill-side.

The day had now broken, and the sun was rising slowly behind the isle of Alsens. Suddenly



a faint pink flush spread over the hill of Dybbol, and then the pink turned to rose-colour, and the rose-colour to red. In the dread solemnity of the hour the thought seemed strangely incongruous; but no one used to English theatres could have looked, I think, upon the spectacle without likening it mentally to the transformation scene in a Christmas pantomime, when the gorgeous glow of colour is poured upon the stage, and the Realms of Bliss open out to the wondering gaze amidst a halo of golden light. Illumined by the rays of the rising sun, the slopes of Dybbol were before us, as clear as if they were but a hundred yards away. The thick serried ranks of soldiers, the scattered sentinels, the snow-white tents, the yellow barrack-sheds, the bare brown fallow fields, were brought forth distinctly to view. Beyond the hill there was a background of smoke from the villages, which the Danish shells had set on fire, tinged with the rich sunlight; and along the crest of the hill, where the battle was raging fiercely, the long straggling hedge of bayonets flashed merrily, as the sunbeams struck upon it; and, if it had not been for the ceaseless, deafening cannonade, one would have doubted

whether a spectacle so exquisite could be one of bloodshed and death. The colour died away as rapidly as it sprang up, and the sun itself soon became obscured by the dull snow-laden clouds which the wind was bearing rapidly from the west. It was now half-past six, and the battle still raged with little apparent abatement. Then I heard a cry raised by soldiers standing near me that the "Rolf Krake" was going into action. Slowly the unwieldy barge-like hull disappeared behind the headland of Dybbol Hill. We could hear the loud crash of her heavy guns, and then the batteries of the Wemming Bund opened fire, not, indeed, at the forts of Dybbol, beneath whose walls the Prussian columns were massed together, but at the gallant iron-clad. There was a long pause—so at least it seemed to us, waiting there—and then at length the "Rolf Krake" appeared from behind the headland, steaming fearlessly beneath the range of Prussian batteries which lines the southern bluffs of the Wemming Bund bay. Slowly she moved on, amidst a very hail-storm of shells from the cliffs above her. They splashed on every side of her, like giant porpoises playing around her keel. As the shots touched

the water, fountains of spray and foam leapt up into the air, sometimes enveloping the vessel in a watery mist. We could see the rifle-balls fall into the water like handfuls of pebbles, and still her open deck remained crowded with the crew. Nothing touched her while she remained in sight, and, passing the batteries one by one, she steamed out into the open, till at last the farewell shots the Prussians sent after her fell so far astern that she was allowed to pursue her way in peace. Then, as if in disappointed anger, the Wemming Bund batteries turned their fire full upon the crest of Dybbol Hill, and we knew that the battle was virtually won, and that the Prussians had retreated in despair.

It was half-past seven, and yet to me it appeared as if not four, but four-and-twenty hours had passed since I was roused by the first opening of the fire. Leaving my post of observation, I hurried again across the bridge. The troops, who had been called out in haste, were now marching homewards, more briskly, but not more steadily, than they had gone forth to battle. The men wore their usual air of stolid indifference, but the officers were in the highest spirits. I was shaken hands with by every acquaintance and every acquaintance's

acquaintance that I met, till my arm ached with the process. Everybody was laughing; but of boasting or fanfarronade there was absolutely nothing amongst the officers I met with. Their tone about the whole affair was like that of high-bred English gentlemen; they were proud of having done their duty, but they never thought of describing the battle as the greatest event of modern times, or of asserting their capacity to whip the Prussians single-handed. Meanwhile, the cannon growled on, though the shells were now few and far between. Passing onwards, I came upon the dark side of the war pageant. Ambulance-men were carrying up the stretchers to the front, soaked and stained with blood. A long file of waggons were bearing back the wounded; and you could see the poor fellows writhe in agony as the springless carts jolted on over the rough stony road. To me, I own the sight of their pale haggard features was more painful than that of the dead men whose shattered corpses were carried past. Their pain, at least, was over, their anguish was still to come. Most of the wounded soldiers had been hit in the head, and many were scarcely sensible; but they

all bore their pain silently, and answered cheerily enough when their comrades along the road gave them a word of kindly greeting. From the brow of the hill I could make out the retiring masses of the Prussians ; but a dropping fire was still being carried on from Broager, and a couple of shells fell too near my path to render a longer stay desirable. From the hill I hurried back to the town, which was now swarming with troops, laughing and shouting with unwonted hilarity.

On my way homewards, I met twenty-two Prussian soldiers who had been taken prisoners during the engagement, to the great satisfaction of the Danes. They were, for the most part, young beardless lads, with fair, fresh German faces ; they belonged to the 18th Regiment, and bore their capture with great apparent unconcern. Nothing could be kinder than their reception by the mob of soldiers who had collected to see them. The Danes shook them cordially by the hand, called them "Camaraden," slapped them on the back, raised bottles of "schnaps" to their lips, stuffed cigars into their hands, and bade them cheer up with a rough but not ill-bred familiarity. The two officers taken prisoners were said to be extremely

affected by their position, and held themselves aloof from any civility ; but the men fraternised very readily with the Danes. At eleven o'clock the Prussians sent in a request for a two hours' armistice to bury their dead. I availed myself of the opportunity to visit the batteries which had been most fired at during the battle, and was surprised to find how very slight was the damage inflicted on them. In spite of nearly a fortnight's bombardment, Dybbol remains as strong as it was at the commencement, or perhaps even stronger. During the armistice the Prussians sent several shells from the Broagerland batteries. The outrage, I must hope in charity, was due to some delay in sending tidings of the truce to the more distant batteries ; but this breach of good faith, even if accidental, will cause the Danes to be more chary of granting such a favour on a future occasion. Towards noon a snow-storm came on, and the haze was so thick that the Wemming Bund shores became invisible from Dybbol. Probably in consequence of the mist, the Prussians have hardly recommenced their fire, and all remains quiet at the hour at which I write.

So much for what I saw myself of this battle.

Let me add a brief statement of its main features, which I have gathered from officers who were in different parts of the field. The Prussians commenced their attack at half-past three in the morning by advancing in large bodies upon the centre and right of the Danish line of works; the chief assault being directed upon Battery No. 6. They failed to take the Danes by surprise, though, from their great proximity to Dybbol heights, they were able to advance very near the crown of the hill before the alarm was given. The Danish batteries opened at once upon the storming columns with a steady and well-directed fire, which seemed to do considerable execution amongst the enemy's works. The Prussians fired steadily enough, but did not advance with any spirit after the first few discharges from the guns of Dybbol. Their officers were seen urging the men on, but without effect. To their repeated cries of "Vorwärts! vorwärts!" the soldiers replied with a hoarse "Nein, nein;" and the few detachments of Germans who pushed their way to the front were never in sufficient force to seriously threaten the works. The most convincing proof of this fact is, that the Danish reserve stationed in the camp half-way up

the hill was never called into action; and the whole burden of the defence was borne by the four regiments who happened to be on duty along the line of works. The Danes, according to all accounts, fought admirably, not only behind their intrenchments, but in the open field, when driving back the advancing columns on the hill-side. Towards six o'clock it became clear that the Prussian attack upon the right and centre was a failure; and then the enemy commenced a movement upon the left wing, which is believed to have been intended for the principal operations of the day. The left is confessedly the weakest part of the Danish line, and it is against this point the bombardment hitherto has been chiefly directed, so that the Germans may very possibly have imagined that the fire of the lower forts was silenced. Happily, the "Rolf Krake" came to the defence of the Danish shore batteries. Anchoring close to the low land which lies between Dybbol and Broager, she fired her guns into the columns of the enemy moving upon the Danish left. It is said that the troops were seized with a panic, and were seen to disperse and take to their heels. At any rate, the advance was effectually stopped. The

“Rolf Krake” was struck by ten shells, one of which fell into her machinery, but the damage done to her was not considerable. The loss of the Danes is estimated by themselves at from 100 to 150 killed and wounded. From what I saw myself, I should be inclined to say it must be nearer two than one hundred. The loss of the enemy can only be surmised; but from the accounts of the prisoners, and from the observation of the soldiers in the Danish batteries, it is believed to be very heavy. With regard to the ultimate influence of this repulse, it is almost too early to form any opinion. The Prussians have received a damaging defeat; and if it is as decisive as is supposed, they will not, I think, advance again to attack Dybbol by storm till they have got batteries much nearer to the hill than those of Broagerland. The effect of the victory has been most favourable to the Danish army. It has raised the spirits of the soldiers which had been somewhat depressed by the capture of Avn-Bierg and Dybbol village, and has created a well-founded impression that, with even a small force like their own, the position of Dybbol may be successfully defended for a lengthened period.

Before I close a letter already too long, I wish to mention one event of the day, which will be of interest to your readers. There is here at present an English gentleman, the Hon. Mr. Herbert, brother of Lord Carnarvon, who has come over to see the siege. Contrary—I trust he will excuse my saying so—to the advice of his acquaintances, Mr. Herbert has been in every spot where firing was going on, and this to such an extent that the Danish soldiers declared he was an English Milord, who had got the spleen, and wished to get wounded in order to experience a new sensation. I have no great sympathy for civilians who thrust themselves into dangers which do not concern them, out of mere curiosity; but, if a man chooses to take a part in the actual fighting, I think he is deserving of the honour which is always due to bravery. While our countryman was in one of the trenches this morning, a Dane fell wounded outside the works in a very exposed situation. There was some hesitation about bringing him in, when Mr. Herbert rushed out under a heavy fire of musketry, and bore the wounded soldier in his arms to a place of safety, amidst the cheers of the Danes. It was a gallant

act done gallantly, and as such I have recorded it.

March 30.

There is a grim French story, whose name I forget, which proposes to describe the experiences of a man who lay for a long time under sentence of death. By a delicate refinement of cruelty, the condemned felon in a French gaol never knows what day is fixed for his execution. Any morning the gaoler may enter his cell and tell him to prepare to die. All he knows is, that, as the executions take place at an early hour, he is safe for the day as soon as six o'clock has passed over. Now, in the story to which I allude, the writer described with morbid detail how, the moment that the morning hour had passed, the condemned criminal, instead of feeling any relief at his respite, grew actually impatient for the long day to pass away, in order that he might know whether his life was to end next morning. A somewhat similar state of mind exists at Sonderborg at the present day. We are, in one sense, under sentence of death. Whenever an attack comes, or the bombardment seems growing earnest,

our hope and prayer are that it may pass over, and leave our existence unchanged. Yet the moment the danger has ceased, there arises a morbid desire that the enemy would recommence his onslaught, in order that we may know whether the next attack is to prove fatal to us or not. Thus already the exultation at the victory of Monday is giving place to feelings of irritation at the inaction of the Prussians. Virtually the siege has been suspended since Monday morning. Both to-day and yesterday the fire has been slack in the extreme. Every couple of hours or so the Prussians appear to wake up, and throw some twenty shells over the brow of Dybbol Hill. Contrary to their former practice, these shells are not directed at the batteries, but are thrown a short distance beyond, with the view, I suppose, of dealing havoc amidst the soldiers in the trenches and encampments. Happily, this desultory irregular fire has been productive of no effect beyond costing the lives of two or three men each day. It need hardly be said that the Danes have had ample time to repair whatever small damage had been done to the works, and I have no doubt that the position is as strong now as at any time since

the siege commenced. When the real blow is to be struck, or whether it is to be struck at all, are still questions which everybody at Sonderborg is again discussing with a painful monotony.

Meanwhile the *morale* of the Danish army has been visibly improved by their successes on Monday. All yesterday the troops were in higher spirits than I have yet seen them; and in the evening, when the Guards' band marched through the streets playing, they were followed by crowds of soldiers singing and cheering lustily. The weather, though inclement enough to English ideas, is still so much milder, that camp life has lost much of its hardships; the roads are excellent, and the men are improving day by day in soldierly gait and discipline. They cannot yet be compared fairly with regular troops, but they have lost much of the raw militia look which distinguished them on my first arrival. Sonderborg itself is being gradually raised from a state of chaos into one of comparative order. New streets are being made to facilitate the passage of troops; signboards are placed all over the town, to point out the different quarters and cantonments; and it is very rare now that our main thoroughfare

is subject to those inextricable blockades which used to be of constant occurrence. The state of siege, which has nominally existed for weeks, is at length being put into force, though to a very mild extent. Police have been sent down from Copenhagen, and some slight supervision is exercised over suspicious characters; the local paper is placed under the censorship of the burgomaster; no lodging-house is allowed to take in strangers without a written permission from the military authorities; and regulations have been made to hinder the villages in the line of route between Sonderborg and the port of Hörup from being overcrowded by the influx of non-combatants leaving the town. Altogether within the last ten days the Danes can report good progress.

The Honourable Mr. Herbert—or Sir Herbert, as our paper, the “Danish Schleswiger,” designates him—is at present the hero of our English colony, for the gallantry he displayed during the engagement of Monday. He was cheered yesterday by the soldiers in the camp, and it is expected here that he will have the order of the Dannebrog given him for his act of bravery. If so, it will be well deserved. I suppose the tide of English

visitors will set in with the spring, if this unhappy war should last long enough. Our latest arrivals are two young University men, who brought velocipedes with them to Copenhagen, on which they intended to have made the journey through Alsen. Unfortunately—or fortunately, as you like to think—the velocipedes broke down a little way out of Copenhagen, and had to be left behind. I recommend the next adventurous Briton coming to see the war to bring stilts with him, which are less liable to break down, and will produce an equal sensation in Sonderborg.

April 1.

It is raining cats and dogs. To give Denmark its due, it is not a rainy country; at any rate, so far as my experience of it extends. Its climate has every other conceivable defect, and, therefore, this admission is one that should fairly be made. I attribute the fact of my being alive at this moment to the edifice of fur coats and boots and caps now in my possession, whose foundation was laid by the kindness of friends acquainted with the country, and whose successive layers have been supplemented by myself at different periods

of my journey. But the patent waterproof mackintosh, the oilskin cape, and splatter-dash leggings, which also form portions of my travelling wardrobe, have been more trouble to me than they are worth, and have hardly yet had an airing. If the Prussians should enter Sonderborg, and I should have to make my escape, leaving my belongings behind me, I shall waste no sighs upon my waterproof raiment. It is the thought of the Pelz, the heat-containing, chill-and-cold-expelling, and richly-with-fur-provided overcoat, to quote its German description, which weighs down my mind whenever I contemplate the possibility of a Prussian occupation. Deerfoot himself, clothed in this cloak, would have been beaten in a foot-race by Daniel Lambert. There will be nothing for me but to follow the example of Joseph, and leave my coat behind me in the clutches of the Prussian Potiphar. This digression, however, will lead me I know not whither if I pursue it further. I have got a long way already from the fact I commenced this letter by stating, and so the best thing I can do is to come back to the point whence I started, and repeat that it is raining cats and dogs. The

whole country is covered over with a grey watery mist; the Prussian batteries, and the heights of Dybbol themselves are almost invisible from my windows, and I cannot restrain a feeling of regret that I have not followed the example of an imaginative friend of mine, and gone off to Copenhagen, in order to describe the siege of Sonderborg from what he happily terms a central position. I should see as much of the siege to-day from Copenhagen, or for that matter from London, as I do here at this moment. All last night we expected a renewal of the assault, and the weather would have been wonderfully favourable for a storming party, as no advancing force could have been seen till it approached close to the batteries, and no shot could have been fired from the guns with anything like precision. Nevertheless, the night went by without any alarm; and this morning we have only the usual amount of random firing. So as the day seems likely to be a blank, let me take the opportunity to describe some home scenes which I have witnessed lately in the interior of the island.

It is hard to get away from the war in Alsén. The roads for miles are filled with ambulances,

powder-trains, and long files of waggons loaded with military stores. In every village, in every house almost, soldiers are quartered; the small white Dannebrog pennants wave in front of every large farmyard, and denote the presence of some officer in command of a company; the roadside hedges far and wide are being cut down in order to make fascines for the fortifications; while even in the most secluded spot you can hear from time to time the heavy booming of the cannon beyond Dybbol. Thus, an atmosphere of war pervades everything, and renders more striking by contrast the peacefulness of houses that have become known to me during my sojourn here. I will try and speak of some of them to you, as I have seen them. I had always fancied that a country vicarage was an institution peculiar to England; you can find its very counterpart here in Denmark. Some three miles from the town, on the shores of the Augustenburg Fiord, lies a vicarage, where, had I been in holy orders, I should like my lot to have been thrown,—a long, low, one-storied house, whose windows look due south, and open upon a smooth well-mown lawn. Creepers cluster on trellis-work over the whitewashed front, and

swallows have built their nests beneath the overhanging eaves of the high-crown thatch roof. The climate is too cold for evergreens, and the summer too dry for turf, such as we have in England. But still, even in this tardy spring-time, you may wander pleasantly enough amidst the flower-beds and bushes by the banks of the little fish-pond, up to the harbour terrace, where you look down on the blue waters of the Als Sund, and the dark woods of the ducal palace of Augustenburg. If you have exhausted the garden, you may go into the large paved farmyard court behind the vicarage, kept as neat and clean as the stable-yard of an English gentleman; pat the dogs, who sleep in sunny corners, upon the head; go into the great stables, where long rows of cows are tethered in their stalls, ruminating lazily; feed the pigeons in the wood-cots; smoke in the stables, where as nice a stud may be inspected as any parson with a taste for horse-flesh could desire to own; and then, entering the house by the hospitable doors, which stand always open, you are welcomed with a sturdy shake of the hand by a hale, portly gentleman, dressed much as an English country rector would be, who was above the

weakness of straight-cut waistcoats and stiff-starched white ties, and whose manners had that stately self-possession which, I think, is only given to men who have lived long in the world, and lived therein easily. You will be shown over a pleasant house, whose walls are covered with book-shelves and prints; the books written in every language, the prints taken from many countries. There are the recollections of vacation tours in foreign countries, we know so well in English homes; the miniature Swiss cottages, the vases of Bohemian glass, the views of Rome and Naples. Your host is too much a man of the world to object to speaking in German, a language as familiar to him almost as Danish; but yet, though all his fortunes are bound up with Alsen, though his stout espousal of the Danish cause will probably entail upon him the loss of his home in the event of a German occupation, he is the staunchest of Danes in feeling. One of his rooms is almost covered with portraits of the celebrities in the war of 1848-50; his house is open to the army, and the officers and soldiers who get quartered there find that their lines have fallen in pleasant places. The one complaint the exqui-

sitely neat, placid, English-looking mistress of the house made to me was, that the officers stayed so short a time that as soon as you became acquainted with them they were obliged to go.

Buried yet deeper in the island is the capital—the “Residenz,” as Germans would call it—of Augustenburg. A sleepier little town cannot well be imagined, even in this war time. Its one street of straggling whitewashed houses leads up to the ducal palace. A century or so ago, some high and mighty Prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderborg-Augustenburg must, I think, have either visited, or read an account of, the glories of Versailles, and resolved to imitate it on his own possessions. The large court which forms the palace has an absurd resemblance to the “Grande Place” of the residence of the Bourbon monarchs. Three sides of the square are occupied by a tall barrack-like whitewashed building, with high red-tiled roof; the fourth side is a range of stables and coach-houses. In the centre of the main block of buildings there is a stone flight of stairs, leading up to the grand entrance, where the dukes used to mount and dismount amidst the bows of their handful of courtiers. Somehow these petty princes

appear to me to have left a not unkindly impression amongst the inhabitants of their Lilliputian dominions. In spite of their treachery to Denmark, the common verdict seems to be, that the fault lay in their heads rather than their hearts; and that they were led into sedition by an unreasoning traditional faith, entertained for generations, that somehow or other they had been deprived of their rights by the reigning house of Denmark. It is a curious fact, as showing how completely they were Germanised, that at the time when the Prince (who calls himself Frederick VIII.) and his brother were children, a tutor was actually brought from Copenhagen to teach them Danish. However, the ducal régime is a thing of the past; the court-yard of the quondam palace is now filled with hay and straw; the long suite of reception-rooms is turned into a hospital; and the beds of the wounded Danes are placed in the halls where the banquets and revels were held in bygone times. A pleasanter hospital I have never seen; the windows of the wards look out into the green forest park, and the stillness of the place is only broken by the sound of the distant cannon. The hospital itself is a perfect marvel of neatness.



Numbers of Swedish and Norwegian army-surgeons have come over to volunteer their aid, so that there is no want of medical assistance. As soon as the patients will bear moving, they are sent off at once to the hospitals at Odensee, to make room for fresh comers. At this moment most of the soldiers at Augustenburg are sufferers from fever, and in the wards I visited the other day there were but few cases of severe wounds. Even fever scarcely seems to make the Danish nature impatient or restless, and the sick men lay in their clean narrow cots almost without moving. Over every bed there stood the name and number of the patient, written on a slate; by each man's side there were books, and some charitable person had strewn the room with tracts, entitled, "A Man Overboard; or, Where are you Going to after Death?" a question which some of these poor fellows are likely to be able to answer before long much more completely than their interrogator. The only want I could observe in the hospital arrangements was the absence of female nurses. The Danish soldiers are wonderfully kind; yet, in the place of the sick and wounded men, I would sooner have an unknown woman to tend me than

the most intimate of my soldier friends. Still, the view of the trees and the water, and the stately avenues, on which the patients can turn their eyes when they are weary of gazing at the arabesques with which the walls of their wards are covered, would console me for the absence of Sisters of Charity. Many times, I think, the exiled Duke must have thought wistfully of the home that was standing empty in this pleasant Alsen island. I admit that he played his cards infamously, and lost the game by his own want of prudence and principle; but yet I cannot help owning that, if his sins have been heavy, his punishment has been heavy also.

Often, too, at Primkenau, in dismal Silesia, where his abode is fixed, the princely exile must think of the Hörup woods, through whose glades he has ridden and hunted so often in days gone by. There is a house there, belonging to the keeper of the forests, where, I doubt not, poor Frederick VIII. has lunched many a time. It nestles in the very heart of the forest, so that you may ride round it a dozen times without coming on it. A great oak stands before the door, which Christian II. is said to have planted three centu-

ries and a half ago, when he was a prisoner at Sonderborg. If any traveller had come to this house, as I did some nights since, on a bright clear evening, he would have found it difficult to believe that a cruel war was waging not two miles away. The great birch woods which stretch between it and the sea deaden the sound of the guns. In front, there is a garden where the children of the house were playing, and under the branches of the giant oak stands the house of the keeper of the ducal forests, now transferred to the possession of the Crown. Like most Danish country houses, it is low, one-storied, and thatch-roofed. Within, the rooms were bare, with whitewashed ceilings, sanded floors, half-covered, perhaps, with a patch of carpet; and iron stoves, which give more than the warmth of a coal fire, with much less of its cheeriness. There are officers stationed in the house—officers are stationed everywhere; and I fancy that the grown-up daughters, however much, as Danish girls, they may deplore the war, still feel the change from the ordinary solitude of their life not an unpleasant one. Family life in Denmark is, to a casual visitor like myself, singularly easy of access; everything is so simple, and

everybody is so kindly-hearted. In this, as in almost every house of well-to-do persons which it has been my good fortune to enter, there was not a lady of the family who did not speak English more or less, and German, and who could not play on the piano with some artistic skill, in so far as I am capable of judging. The Danish ladies, I should say, are not strong-minded, and have certainly no idea of the rights of women. It is curious, and at first rather startling to an Englishman, to find that the young ladies, who have been playing and talking to you before supper about Bulwer, and Dickens, and Thackeray, and the Princess Alexandra—a never-failing topic of conversation—carry round the cups and change the plates; and, in fact, wait upon you instead of servants. I have no doubt they cook the dinner themselves, and mend the snow-white table-linen. Then, when the meals are over—how the women get fed is a mystery to me—they come back into the drawing-room and resume their conversation with perfect equanimity. I do not know that I should like to live in the country in Denmark. I think it possible I might get tired of whist at farthing points, of eating brown bread and butter

morning, noon, and evening, of going to bed at ten and rising at seven. But still the ordinary existence here is singularly easy and unpretending. And even in the throbs of a struggle for national being, the placidity of the current of daily life scarcely seems ruffled.

THE BOMBARDMENT.

April 3 (3 A.M.).

This morning was almost the quietest we have had since the siege first commenced. The Prussian batteries preserved a silence which in itself was ominous. But still there was nothing to indicate more than the ordinary briskness of fire which has hitherto invariably followed any interval of inaction. The day was clear and bright, with a cold east wind driving the clouds away, and the Wemming Bund shores lay distinct before us, as if they were scarcely half a mile distant. About two o'clock the firing commenced, and gradually grew brisker. It seemed as if the Prussians were going to make up for lost time, and fire off their stipulated allowance of shells with greater haste than usual. I was riding in the island at the time, and

paid but little attention to a sound which had become monotonous by repetition. Then, at last, the noise grew louder and louder, and the firing more close and constant; and I turned my horse's head homewards, feeling certain that something of more than ordinary import was going on. I was then three miles or so from the town; but before I had got many yards upon my road I heard the bugles sounding the alarm amidst the farms where the troops were quartered, and I knew that the war had commenced again in earnest. I galloped back, but found the town scarcely moved from its ordinary apathy. Everybody at Sonderborg had got so used to the crash of artillery and the sound of shells, that a little noise more or less created no extraordinary alarm. The officers I spoke to assured me that the firing had only been a little more lively than common, and that no serious attack was apprehended. Only half satisfied by these assertions, I strolled out to the shore, and, as soon as the Dybbol Hill was clear in sight, I could have no doubt that something very different was going on from the halting, hesitating fire to which we have hitherto been accustomed. The shells were flying to and fro at the rate, as I counted

them, of twenty-five a minute ; the roar of artillery was incessant ; and the sides of Dybbol and Broager Hills were covered with dense masses of smoke. The alarming fact was that, amidst this tremendous fire, the Wemming Bund batteries were almost silent. The question was, whether this noise was created by the fire of our own batteries, or by that of the new batteries which the Prussians have been some time erecting on the range that passes from Avn-Bierg on the Wemming Bund, through Dybbol and Ragebol villages, to Sand-Bierg on the Als-Sund. It was not long before I learnt that the latter explanation was the correct one. The Prussians had at last opened fire from the position they acquired so fatally on the 17th, and the works of Dybbol were being thundered at with such a discharge of artillery as I believe has not been heard since the days of the Redan and the Malakoff.

Suddenly, amidst the roar and din of the distant cannon, I caught the sound of a near distinct crash, and I saw a white puff of smoke rise up from the castle of Sonderborg, which stands at the very entrance of the Als-Sund harbour. The first shot was put down by the bystanders to the devia-

tion of a gun aimed at the Dybbol bastion. But then, hardly at a minute's interval, shell followed shell more and more rapidly, and it became only too certain that the enemy were again bombarding the defenceless town of Sonderborg. My own position was not exactly a pleasant one. The house where I have been so long and so hospitably sheltered looks, as I have mentioned before, straight upon the Wemming Bund, and stands on the edge of the sea, close to the castle. It was, therefore, exactly in the line of fire, and any return to it was for the moment inadvisable. So I worked my way through the outskirts of the town, trusting that the cannonade would slacken towards nightfall, and took up my position on a high hill, which rises at the back of Sonderborg. There I found a crowd of lookers-on collected, watching, like myself, the progress of the bombardment. The evening was coming on, and the light was fading in the west, but the constant discharge of cannon-shot kept on unabated. The roar of the artillery is indescribable, except to those who have heard it. Not a sound seemed to pass without a flash and bang, and dull, deep rumbling. The whole western sky was covered with dark lurid

clouds. Which was the smoke of cannon, which that of burning houses, it was impossible to discern. The centre batteries, Nos. 4 and 6, commanding the high road to Flensburg, against whose earthworks the fire was mainly directed, were enveloped in a mist of flame and haze. Every shot appeared to take effect. Great puffs, of earth-coloured hue, rose up towards the sky, as shell after shell hit the earthworks, and splashed the mud scores of feet into the air. But, though the fire was quickest against the centre, it extended all along the line from the Als-Sund to the Wemming Bund. Whether the Danish batteries were silenced—whether it was found impossible to man the guns beneath that pitiless, ceaseless fire—whether it was not thought advisable to respond—I cannot say. This I know, that scarcely any response was made. The hail of shells and cannon-shot beat down mercilessly upon the Dybbol heights; and as the dusk grew on great blood-red patches of flame, like the lava-chinks on Mount Vesuvius, appeared on the hill-side. Some barracks which had been run up to shelter the troops were burning, and the fierce cold winds fanned the flames into a devouring fire.

Fancy Martin's picture of "The Last Great Judgment Day," coloured with the hues that Turner would have spread upon it, and you will have some notion of that weird, awful scene.

But I own that, for us, the bombardment of the town, though infinitely less terrible as a spectacle, had a much stronger fascination. The two Wemming Bund batteries, which stand on the extreme of the Prussian right, were shelling the lower part of Sonderborg with a cruel accuracy. Not an intimation had been given—not a warning of any kind—such as has been afforded of late in the most barbarous of wars. On the first bombardment of the 15th, we might charitably hope that the few shells thrown into the town were sent solely to clear the harbour, and not to destroy the dwellings of peaceful inhabitants. No such excuse could be suggested at the present time. The bombs came whizzing towards the city with deliberate intent and aim. It is wonderful how soon you can tell the direction of a shell by its sound; and whenever a shot was fired in our direction the crowd of townsmen and soldiers amongst whom I stood cried out that the shell was coming long before it struck. We could

see the dark puffs of smoke rising in dull succession from the houses near the port, and at last the smoke was followed by flame, and we saw that a house was set on fire. With the fierce wind then blowing, it seemed probable that the whole city would soon be destroyed. Happily, the wind fell away suddenly, and the conflagration was extinguished. If the night were only here we knew there must be a lull in the shelling, but the night seemed endlessly long in coming.

At length, weary of waiting, I passed into the upper part of the town, where I had managed, luckily, to secure a shelter comparatively out of harm's way. The sight which met me there was sad enough in all conscience. The people were flying from the town, as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah may have fled from the accursed cities. There was little time to take anything with them in their flight. Women with scared pale faces, dragging little toddling children by the hand, were hastening away, God knows whither. Old men, bowed with age, were groping their way timidly up the long winding street. Some of the wayfarers had got bundles of bedding in their hands; others had articles of household furniture;

long processions of carts, laden with every object that could be gathered together hastily, were rattling away as fast as the terrified horses could drag them ; and the whole current of the population, which at this hour on ordinary evenings is coming homewards, was streaming out of the city. The wounded soldiers in the Caroline Amelia Hospital, which stands, or used to stand, close to the church, had been torn from their beds, and were passing in a file of carts up to Augustenburg.

And then, mixed up with the citizens and the soldiers, came in the wounded men from the front. No estimate can be formed yet of the loss beneath this afternoon's deadly fire, but it must have been a heavy one. Dead bodies, half covered with the blood-stained straw in which they lay, were carried by in a dismal progress. File after file of soldiers moved on, bearing their wounded comrades on stretchers through the streets, and the moans of some of these poor wretches could be heard for hundreds of yards away ; others lay senseless, and, to all appearance, lifeless, with their wounds half bandaged, and with dark streaks of blood marking their heads

and breasts. I have no wish to describe to you the horrors that I saw ; men with their legs blown off, their bodies ripped open with shells, and their faces battered into a mass of shapeless flesh, are sights not pleasant to see, or to think of when seen.

Towards nine o'clock the fire slackened, and almost died away. There was breathing time for a moment, and I used it to make my way to the house where my luggage was lying. On my passage through the town I could see the damage that had been done. The room where the headquarters of the staff were placed had been struck by a shell, which had passed through the ceiling and the floor, and the whole staff had decamped at once to quarters higher up the town. Another shell had burst through the coffee-room of the Holsteinisches Haus, where I had dined dozens of times, and the floor of a room in the same hotel, where I was playing cards last night, was covered with bricks which had been knocked down by the shock. A watchmaker's shop, by the town-hall, was shivered into fragments ; and a house close to the burgomaster's was literally knocked down. The castle itself—at which the

chief fire was aimed—had suffered comparatively little, though several bombs had fallen through the roof. The casualties, as far as I can yet learn, have not been heavy, considering the fire. One shell hit a detachment of soldiers passing along the main street, and killed two, and wounded nineteen. At the house where my domicile has been fixed for the last six weeks everything was in disorder; the servants were crying, the officers' luggage was being brought hurriedly out of the rooms, and I had only time to pack up my bag, wish a hearty farewell to my kind host, and make my way back again to the upper town, before the bombardment commenced again.

It is now three o'clock while I write, and the bombardment still continues, though slacker than in the day. What damage has been done to these works it is impossible for us yet to learn. The Danish officers insist that no serious injury has been inflicted; but it is certain that, from whatever cause, the fire of the Danish batteries has ceased for hours. Heavy rain has come on, which may possibly retard the expected attack of the Prussians.

AUGUSTENBURG, April 3.

The day was beginning to break when I closed my letter to you this morning. Sleep was almost impossible; the large guest-room of Reymuth's Inn, where I had found shelter for the night, was crowded with a motley company of persons who, like myself, had been shelled out of their abodes, and had come to the upper town as being comparatively safe. When my letter was finished, I laid down upon the floor, in the vain hope of getting an hour or two of rest. For some time I speculated on which side of the wall I should be safest in the event of a shell striking the roof. Soon, however, I came to the conclusion that there were no data on which to argue the point; so I coiled myself up in my furs and rugs, and tried in vain to sleep. I suppose that I dozed, from the fact that every shell which struck the lower part of the town during the night woke me up with a start. But I heard the clock strike every half-hour, and I was right glad when the weary night was over, and I got up, with every bone of my body aching, shook the dust from off my clothes, and prepared for the business of the day. It is

bad enough being in a bombarded town in the daylight ; but it is nothing to the knowledge that shells are falling around you in the darkness. It was a strange scene on which I looked, as I threw open the window of the stifling room where I had passed the night. The population was flocking hastily out of the town ; the troops, drawn up in the streets, were standing close to the walls in the hope of finding cover in case a shell should fall near them ; dark masses of smoke were still rising from the side of Dybbol hill : for the moment, the fire was slack, and there seemed to be a temporary cessation of the merciless bombardment. It was clear, even if I had so wished it, that there was no stopping where I was. The head-quarters, which had been already moved off to the very outskirts of the town, were being moved further into the country. A shell had fallen into the garden of the inn ; another some fifty yards higher up the street. Officers and civilians were alike quitting the doomed city ; and the only persons stopping were those who were too poor or too helpless to find shelter elsewhere. The women who owned the hotel were in tears and hysterics, and would not have consented to stay another night in the house

for all the guests in the world, if they had each been as rich as Monte Cristo. My difficulty was about my luggage, which was too heavy for me to carry, and which I was yet unwilling to leave behind. In this dilemma I and a brother-correspondent of mine bethought ourselves of a kind friend whose company was stationed at a farm, some half mile distant, upon the sea-shore. To reach it we had to make a *détour* of nearly two miles, in order to avoid the range of the shells, which kept pouring into the town from Broagerland with fatal accuracy. When we reached the farmhouse, where we had often been hospitably received, we found our friend absent. Happily he had left word to render us any assistance we might desire, and we obtained the loan of a cart to convey our luggage to Hörup harbour. The look of this quiet farm-yard bore painful tokens of the presence of war. Scores of families had flocked in from Sonderborg, begging for shelter in the great barns, though even these lay but a little way beyond the range of the shells. At any moment the fire might be turned against the "Laader Gaarde" itself; and its landlord was fully aware of the dangers of his position. We advised him

to fly, but he told us with truth that his whole fortune lay in the stock of cattle he had collected within his barns, and that until the buildings were actually in flames he and his wife meant to stick to them. Yet, though the man was old, and the father of a large family, there was no look of fear about him. He spoke about the whole matter calmly, and with little apparent excitement. True to his Danish hospitality, he pressed us to stop and breakfast; but, tempting as the offer was to men tired out and hungry, there was no time to be lost. Every minute a shell fell into the town with a deadly crash, which could be heard for miles away. Smoke was already issuing from the houses near the port; and the rector of the town, who had just come in with his wife, told us that the flames were spreading rapidly. The cart was hurriedly got ready, and we then retraced our way, making even a longer *détour* than before to the back of Sonderborg. We left the cart under the brow of the hill, and then pushed on as hastily as we could to the inn, which stands a short way down the long steep descent leading from the heights to the Als-Sund; the hotel was in utter confusion; there was nobody to ask for our bill, or to take our

money. So we loaded ourselves with our luggage, and dragged it as rapidly as we could up the hill to our cart. In spite of the crowds which had left the day before, there was still a constant stream of women and children pouring out of the place; the truth is, that the poorer inhabitants have nowhere to go to, and flock back to their homes with a rabbit-like instinct whenever the immediate danger seems over for the hour. But now there could be no thought of stopping. The Town-hall, the Holstein Hotel, the Post Office, and all the shops near this little knot of buildings, were in flames. Fifty-seven people—civilians, not soldiers—had been killed and wounded during the morning in this quarter of the town. The streets themselves were deserted, except by soldiers marching to and fro on duty; the air was heavy with the scent of gunpowder. At the brow of the hill a crowd of people were collected, watching the progress of the fire and the effect of the bombardment. There was not much speaking, and all faces were pale and anxious. The fire against the Dybbol batteries had almost died away, or at any rate, was reduced to comparative insignificance by the constant fire upon the town. The soldiers themselves looked

depressed by the danger which they had no means of resisting. No hesitation of any kind was visible in obeying orders ; indeed, the men marched down the street towards the fire with their usual heavy tramp, but there was no singing to be heard, and their countenances bore no longer the stolid look so habitual to them.

Many friends of mine—men in whose company I have now lived daily for weeks—were amongst the crowd. There was little time for leave-taking or conversation. A warm grasp of the hand—a wish, heartily felt, I believe, on both sides, for each other's safety, and we parted company. Our luggage was heaped upon the cart, and we left Sonderborg amidst the crash of shells and falling walls. Our first step was to reach the harbour of Hörup, and there leave our bags and trunks. It was a weary trudge through the heavy roads, knee-deep in mire, especially to men who had not changed their clothes, or slept all night, or eaten anything in the morning. However, if we had been disposed to grumble, I think the sight of the groups we passed at every turning would have checked all inclination. I had left neither family nor belonging in Sonderborg ; my interest in the

issue of the contest was only that of a spectator. I had plenty of money in my pockets, and strength to bear any hardships which might fall upon me in my flight; but these poor wretched families—fathers, mothers, children, grandchildren—were going forth from their homes ruined, destitute; with no knowledge where they would find shelter for their heads or food for their mouths, and yet they toiled on, sadly, if you will, but still silent and uncomplaining. God have mercy on all who can find no home in this cold, chill night! God forgive those who have wrought this cruel and wicked wrong!

At the little port of Hörup it was impossible to find even sitting room. It was only as an extreme favour that I could get permission to leave my bags in an outhouse. No steamer was lying in the harbour for Copenhagen; and even if there had been I should not have availed myself of the opportunity, as my intention is, if possible, to remain in Alsen until the fate of Dybbol is decided one way or the other. But this morning my prospect of getting any shelter whatever seemed of the slightest. Sonderborg was untenable; and the two thousand inhabitants, and some thousands of

soldiers who were quartered there, were all scattered over the neighbouring villages. A civilian, at the best, had a bad chance compared with the soldiery; and amongst civilians a preference was very naturally and justly given to the personal acquaintances of the villagers. We knocked at house after house, but with the same invariable answer, that no room could be obtained for love or money. I had been engaged that day to dine with the rector of Ulkeböl parish, an invitation which had passed entirely out of my recollection amidst the excitement of the last four-and-twenty hours. Of course all such engagements were cancelled by the events of the day, but still I resolved to keep my appointment, in the hopes that I might find some shelter for the night under the roof of the parsonage. I induced the cart which had brought my luggage to take me on to Ulkeböl, and was jolted for two hours over the vilest of roads, in the roughest of springless carts. It is in these conveyances that the wounded are carried from the field of battle to the hospitals, and I could form some opinion, from my own experience, of what must be the sufferings of these unhappy wretches. When I reached the Prester-Gaarde,

as it is called, tired, sleepy, unwashed, and ravenous, I found that the most I could hope for was an hour's shelter. The whole house had just been taken up for the residence of the Commander-in-Chief, General Gerlach, and his staff, and everything was in confusion. However, our host would not hear of our leaving till we had dined with him, and the proposal to men who had not had a meal all day, and had been stirring from early dawn, and saw little hope of getting a meal that night, was too tempting to be declined. I had the honour of dining in company with General Gerlach and his aides-de-camp, one and all of whom were as kindly and courteous as I have always found all Danish officers to be. It was strange, though, to observe how completely military feeling appeared to have accustomed their minds to the incidents of war. The head-quarters themselves had been bombarded; the city of Sonderborg was burning; and the crash of the shells could be heard in the far distance from the rooms wherein we sat. Yet everybody took it all as a matter of course. The conversation hardly turned upon the events of the day, but consisted of anecdotes about the respective merits of the

quarters which the officers had occupied in the former Schleswig-Holstein campaigns. In fact, it seemed impossible to a civilian to believe that the conduct of the war lay in the hands of the singularly quiet and nonchalant gentlemen collected round the pastor's board. Every house in the neighbourhood of the parsonage had been taken up for the business of the army, and I found that no possibility existed of finding a room anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood. Every officer expressed a fear that it would be impossible for us to procure quarters anywhere, and if I had listened to their advice I should now have been tossing about on board one of the little fishing-smacks which crowd the harbour of Hörup. I resolved, however, to make one more trial, and trudged on again to Augustenburg, from which place I now write to you. By a wonderful stroke of good fortune I secured a room there by the kindness of the correspondent of a Danish newspaper, and have got a table to write upon, and—what I care for much less—a rug to sleep in on the floor of the sitting-room.

I have spoken at length of these my personal adventures, because I believe they will give you

a fairer idea of the practical working of the bombardment than any communication of hearsay reports. The moral result of this act will be, I think, to cover the Prussians with infamy. Without intimation of any kind, a murderous fire has been directed upon the town of Sonderborg, filled, as the enemy must have known it to be, with women and children. A notification that the firing would commence after the lapse of some hours could have done no conceivable injury to the Prussians, and would have spared a fearful amount of needless and useless suffering and bloodshed. The Prussians have decided otherwise, contrary to the rules of war and the dictates of common humanity. Baffled in their assault upon the forts, they have consoled themselves by wreaking destruction from a safe distance on an unfortified and defenceless town belonging to the very country whose welfare they profess to be the object of their having gone to war. Deep and bitter is the indignation of the Danes; and, unless I err, this feeling will be shared in by Europe.

LAADENGAARDE (near Sonderborg), April 4.

The town of Augustenburg—and, indeed, the whole island of Als—was astir early on the morning which followed the bombardment of Sonderborg. Scant and wretched must have been the shelter gained by hundreds on that dreary night. Some idea of the crowd which spread itself far and wide in search of a roof to hide beneath may be gathered from one solitary fact. In the course of my own disconsolate wanderings I espied a fisher's smack of some five-and-twenty tons burden moored off the causeway which crosses the Augustenburg Fiord. Seeing the fisherman on board, I asked him if he would let me shelter myself in the narrow hold of the vessel, where I thought it barely possible there might be room for myself and my two companions to crawl in. The man told me he should have been very glad to allow me, but that three families from Sonderborg had already crammed themselves into the hold, and it was impossible to find standing-room there for another human being. It was by the merest chance that I obtained quarters anywhere; and those quarters consisted of a cane sofa in a little

room, which held three other inmates besides myself. As a proof of the exceeding honesty of the people, it is worth while here to record the following incident. There was, as you may believe, hardly any conceivable amount, however exorbitant, which I would not have gladly paid to avoid passing the night in the open air. I made no bargain beforehand; when I asked for my bill in the morning—including, as it did, supper, bed, and breakfast—I was charged one shilling and fourpence altogether. My host, though an unmistakable Dane in look and manner, was, like most of the inhabitants of the ex-ducical capital, *Deutschgesinnt*, or German-minded, to a marvellous degree. He took in Hamburg newspapers, preferred talking German to Danish, and spoke of the Duke of Augustenburg as “his lawful sovereign.” For the Prussians, however—the men who had bombarded Sonderborg—he expressed the utmost aversion, and said there was not a Schleswig-Holsteiner who would not sooner belong to Denmark than be annexed to Prussia.

As soon as I was up and dressed, my first impulse was to hurry on to the neighbourhood of Sonderborg to learn how things were going on

there. The fires which rose from the town had pretty well died away during the night; the noise of cannon-shot had become very rare; and it was evident that, for some reason or other, there was a lull in the attack. The rattle of musketry had been heard just before daybreak at Augustenburg, and the bugles had sounded the alarm, so it was supposed an assault had taken place. But, indeed, nothing could be known from the floating rumours of the place, and the few officers and officials I came across were too much occupied in the hurry occasioned by the general confusion to think of anything, except where quarters could be found for the service of their different departments. Happily the road was now comparatively clear, and the cold east wind had dried up the mud in a wonderfully short time. It is, by the way, a mercy, for which the inhabitants of Sonderborg can hardly be grateful enough, that the inactivity of the Prussians did not permit them to commence the bombardment a month, or even a fortnight, ago. Had this been the case, the sufferings of the population, driven forth from their homes while snow was on the ground, and the roads were impassable from mud, would have

been fearfully increased; they were bad enough as it was, but they might have been yet more grievous. The pause in the firing had caused hundreds of the townsfolk to retrace their steps towards the town. Two long files of waggons, going opposite ways, blocked up the high road. Those coming from Sonderborg were filled with chairs, tables, carpets, washing-stands, mirrors, pictures, and all the various apparatus of houses turned inside out. It looked as if brokers had levied an execution upon the whole city. Everything had been thrown pell-mell into the vans, without thought for arrangement. Rosewood pianos lay in strange company with kitchen dressers, and fire-irons protruded from mahogany drawers in dangerous proximity to gilt-framed pictures. Every now and then a van had broken down beneath its load, and the furniture lay smashed and broken in the ditches by the road-side. Alongside the vans there trudged men and women, carrying under their arms, or in great baskets slung on sticks, chimney ornaments, china ware, plaster images, and other little treasures of household life which had escaped so far unhurt. At the cottages along the road the vans were

unloading their burdens, and the cottagers seemed ready enough to give such stowage-room as they were able; and in front of almost every house there were groups of children prattling and playing merrily. At that happy age fear is soon forgotten, and change of any kind is always a pleasure. The flitting was rare fun, and for them there was no thought of the morrow.

On the other hand, the file of carts going townwards were laden with living freights. Everybody was off to see what had become of what once were their houses—to save what salvage they might out of the general wreck. Soldiers, peasants, fishermen, housewives, and well-dressed ladies were huddled together in the straw spread at the bottom of the carts. Amongst the younger members of the fairer sex the presence of the calamity had not extinguished the ruling passion of womankind. It was odd to observe how, even in their sorry plight, they had contrived to dress themselves with some trace of elegance; how they squatted in the straw as gracefully as circumstances would permit; and what an obvious consciousness they betrayed of the fact that stolen glances were cast at them from time to time by

the passers-by. Amongst the elder females the one thought or care was about their furniture. Women, as a rule, cling to their household belongings with a tenacity incomprehensible to men; and the present occasion was not an exception to the rule. Living in a small community, in a time of excitement, as I have done for weeks, you soon form a speaking acquaintance with scores of people whose names are unknown to you. Amongst the crowd there were hundreds of persons whose faces were familiar to me, and many were the greetings which I met with from the wayfarers. Seated in a cart was an old lady, the owner of a house where friends of mine had lodged till the day before. When the bombardment began she refused to leave her dwelling, though it was one of the most exposed of the whole town. "No," she said; "she had seen every brick of it built; she had bought every stick in it by her own labour; and if the Prussians destroyed her furniture, they might just as well kill her too." For four-and-twenty hours, while the shells were falling round her house like hailstones, she kept her resolution. It was only when the flames were actually spreading in the street wherein she lived that she fled, with a sick

niece confined to her bed by illness. Strange to say, her house, and that of the burgomaster, where I had had my abode—perhaps the two most exposed buildings in the town—had not been struck by a single shell, though the ground near them was furrowed up with shot. The old lady was hastening back to the town to carry off what she could save, and even her misfortunes had only increased her habitual loquacity. A little way on, my hand was shaken warmly by a man whose face at first I could not recognize, it was so changed from its usual aspect of good-humoured importance, so pale and haggard. He was the landlord of an hotel of which I had been a constant frequenter, and with whom I had many and many times discussed the progress of the siege. His house had been literally battered to the ground; he himself had escaped, with his wife and child, a baby in arms, but had saved nothing. The one treasure he was dragging back from the town was a baby's go-cart. In all likelihood he was utterly and helplessly ruined. A notorious German sympathiser, he could not expect much help from the Danish Government; while his chances of being indemnified by the Prussians were problematical

in the extreme. Alarm and misery seemed to have crushed the strength out of his mind and body ; and though a young, vigorous man in years, he looked old and feeble. A few steps more, and I was curtsied to by the servant-girl of a family where I had been a daily visitor. The place was destroyed ; the family were driven away to find shelter where they could ; her situation was gone, and she was thrown upon the world, friendless. Her eyes were swollen with tears, and she could hardly speak for sobbing. "She was going," so she told me, "to leave the island at once—to get anywhere away from the shells ; and then what was to become of her, God knew !" Poor child ! she was young and pretty ; and death is not the worst evil of which war is the guilty cause.

And so I might tell you dozens of such encounters I made upon my road. The poor people were glad enough to tell their misfortunes. I heard but few complaints, and little grumbling. The patient, kindly nature of the Schleswigers was hardly stirred to bitterness by the cruelty of their sufferings. They were ready enough to help each other ; and carts and arms and shelter were

placed freely at the disposal of all who needed them ; but of passionate excitement there was no trace visible. As we approached the town we could see a dark column of smoke rising from near the water-side ; but the batteries, both of the Danes and of the enemy, continued unaccountably silent. The popular belief was that an armistice had been granted for a few hours ; but on inquiring at head-quarters I could find no authorisation for the rumour. However, between eight and half-past one, not a shot was fired. Whether the Prussian ammunition was exhausted, or whether, after thirty-six hours' shelling, the truth dawned upon the mind of the Prussian commanders that it was not humane or civilised to bombard a town without giving some time for non-combatants to escape, I cannot say. Shells, as I have already mentioned, had fallen right beyond the town, and had even struck the windmills, which lie on the extreme edge of the hill, a mile away from the Als-Sund. As I have frequently told you, Sonderborg consists of one long winding main street, leading up from the shore of the straits to the summit of the hill on whose side the town stands. On either side this main street there is an irre-

gular mass of buildings, terminating at a short distance amidst gardens and orchards; but I should think fully one-half of the houses in the town are situated in the High Street, as we should call it. This thoroughfare may be roughly divided into three sections, of unequal length. The first section consists of a crooked narrow lane, rather than street, from the bridge to the town-hall; the second, of a broad, straight, even thoroughfare, from the town-hall to the military post-office, in which all the chief shops and dwellings are placed; and the third, of a steep, narrow, winding alley, passing from the post-office to the windmills and the open country. The first and third of these sections had been comparatively untouched. The deadly fire of the Prussian cannon had been turned almost exclusively against the middle section, the Regent Street of Sonderborg. Until we had passed Reymuth's Hotel, where my last night in Sonderborg was spent, we could form no idea of the desolation that had been wrought. Most of the windows in the upper town were broken, and there were great chasms in many of the roofs; but still the houses were open, and several of them were occupied by

soldiers. It was only as we turned the corner, and gazed full down the street, that we knew what the bombardment really meant. I saw Gaëta the day after the capitulation, when the dead still lay unburied on the sun-lit hill-side ; I visited Palermo before any attempt had been made to repair the injuries occasioned by the Neapolitan shells ; but in neither place, to my mind, was the havoc wrought comparable to that occasioned here. I know not how to describe the scene. I have walked hundreds of times up and down this little thoroughfare, till I could tell you well nigh the name of every shop in it, and the order in which they came. Yet I declare, if I had been placed there to-day, without knowledge of the event, I might have guessed for ever without finding out I was in Sonderborg. The whole quarter was one mass of bare walls, charred rafters, and tottering chimneys, enveloped in a dim haze of smouldering smoke. The few walls left standing looked so near toppling over, that I felt as though the shock of one cannon-shot would carry the whole mass crumbling to the ground. The buildings here, one and all, are of poorly-made bricks, and lath and plaster ; and every house by the road-side,

almost without exception, was literally gutted. Many of the dwellings were absolutely indistinguishable. I looked in vain for a bookseller's shop which had been one of my chief resorts. I could only tell that it might have been any one of the heaps of blackened bricks which encumbered the road-side. The bare walls of the town-hall were left standing, but the roof and flooring and rooms had disappeared utterly. The street was covered with fragments of shells and tiles and rafters; but the houses had fallen inwards, so that there was little impediment to one's passage. Crowds of people were poking amidst the ruins, to try and find something of their lost property; but a dead silence reigned about the place. Everybody was still, awe-struck with the destruction round them. At any moment the Devil's work might be begun again, and all ears were watching for the first whirr of the shell, so that they might scamper from the dangerous ground whose range had been obtained with such fatal accuracy. Fifteen hundred shells had fallen in this street, while those which had passed beyond its range might have been counted by a few scores. Of the

number of casualties it is impossible as yet to speak with certainty.*

When I had given such a cursory glance as I could spare time for to the town, I passed through the side streets—by the hospitable house where I had lived so long, which now stood deserted and tenantless, with every pane in the windows broken, but still happily intact—and so out into the fields. Thence, in company with two gentlemen who have resolved to share their fortunes with me, I made my way to a farm-house some little distance in the country, where a friend of ours was stationed. There, thanks to his kindness, we found not only rations but shelter, and I have thus been fortunate enough to secure an abode, from whence I can command a view of the progress of the siege, with as little danger from shells as can be hoped for by any one whose fate throws him in the path of active war. As soon as we had thus billeted ourselves, we hurried off in search of the head-quarters and the telegraph

* The nearest approach to an official statement of the casualties I could ever find put them down at fifty-seven killed and wounded. Possibly half that number would be a truer estimate; but the guilt of the act does not depend on the amount of the casualties caused by it.

office. It was a long search and a difficult one, as everything was in the utmost confusion. At last we found our old friend the postmaster, wandering about disconsolately in a village some two miles inland, looking after quarters for the Royal post-office. Half his mails, he told us, had been burnt in the destruction of the town post-office; and though he had been asking for a new office since daybreak, he could find absolutely nothing to serve even as a temporary shelter. Where the post-office was to be in future he knew no more than ourselves. Happily, he had a bundle of English newspapers, which he had put apart for us; and I read there the general expectations of a pacific solution expressed in leading articles written a week ago, with the smoke of Sonderborg full in view as a comment on the impossibility of prophesying.

April 6.

The gods — of whom Epicurus wrote and Tennyson has sung—would not, I think, have found such placid contentment in watching the thunderbolts roll beneath them, if there had been any chance that a stray flash of lightning might

deviate from its course, and strike Olympus instead of the terrestrial regions. And thus for me, living within sight and sound, and not altogether without reach, of the pitiless storm of shells which comes daily pelting down on Dybbol and Sonderborg, the affair has a personal human interest, not compatible with philosophical equanimity. But for persons dwelling at a remote distance from the scene of action, I am afraid the narrative of each day's bombardment must seem uncommonly like that of the preceding or succeeding one. The frequenters of Jullien's concerts must remember the grand descriptive Army Quadrilles, which used to close the first part of his entertainment. The programme described was in that glowing language of which the Napoleon of conductors commanded the monopoly: we read with wonder how the enemy could be heard stealing forth from his intrenchments; how then the alarm sounded, every heart throbbed with manly vigour, and the gallant defenders of their country crept from their couches; again, the outposts are driven in—the skirmishers advance, and so on. All this, or rather something of which this is the meagerest skeleton, was contained in the programme

of the Promenade Concerts. We were supposed to be able to understand the progress of the battle by the strains of the music; but, speaking for myself, all we could perceive was a terrific crash of instruments, a deafening Babel of noise. Now, if I were to describe the siege as I see and hear it, I suspect you would know as much about it as you would have done of the storming of Sebastopol from hearing Jullien's Crimean Quadrille, without the assistance of his programme. Noise, smoke, and noise is about all the impression gathered from the spectacle. This afternoon I have been watching the progress of the bombardment for a couple of hours; and yet what I saw might be described in as many minutes. Standing by the sea-shore, sheltered from the cold bleak wind, I could see the career of every shell from its birth to its death. The whole panorama of the war lay before me, and I looked straight up the Wemming Bund bay from the opposite coast of Alsen. On my left, across the calm, rippleless waters, were the cliffs of Broagerland, wreathed in a haze of smoke; on my right was the deserted city of Sonderborg; and in the centre, between these two boundaries of my horizon, stretched the hill of

Dybbol. The fire was fast and furious. Sometimes it came from the Danish guns directed against Broager ; then the crest of Dybbol hill was crowned with a belt of smoke ; and one loud sharp report was all I heard of the course of the shells, falling as they did far away out of sight and hearing. Sometimes the guns of Broager returned the fire ; then there was first a volume of smoke along the cliffs occupied by the Prussians, followed by a deep hoarse report, and succeeded after a minute's interval by a second and more distinct explosion as the shells struck the Danish batteries. Sometimes the guns were turned from the Wemming Bund upon Sonderborg, and then I could hear the panting, whirring sound of the shells as they flew through the sky above our heads, growing louder first, and then fainter as they passed onwards, till it ended in a bang and crash as the bombs came bounding down upon the roofs of Sonderborg. And sometimes every battery began firing at once in every direction, till it was impossible to distinguish anything, or to say more than that shells were falling and bursting everywhere. Even of the injury done by the bombardment it is hard for an observer to judge, except by

the indications of the smoke. A shell bursts amidst the buildings of the town, a crash is heard, a pillar of smoke rises up into the air, and then it is over. What walls have fallen, what havoc has been wrought, even the best of field-glasses will not inform you. It is only when the fire has ceased, and you can venture into the scene of the bombardment, that you can judge of its effect. Gradually, too, as the shelling goes on, the whole country becomes enveloped in a canopy of smoke ; great banks of ink-black clouds gather about the horizon, against which each successive puff of white, new-born smoke stands out distinctly, till it floats away itself and is gathered into the darkness.

To-day the one visible result of two hours' almost uninterrupted shelling is, that the town of Sonderborg has again been set on fire ; the flames, however, do not seem to spread ; and, indeed, a conflagration which cleared away the whole mass of ruins would now be no loss to the Danes. Apparently, the shells have been chiefly directed against the lower part of the town, that adjoining the Als Sund : the central quarter, as I stated in my letter yesterday, is entirely destroyed ; and the upper part lies somewhat out of

reach. No doubt the Prussians have already inflicted a vast amount of misery on the population of Sonderborg, and they may inflict more still; but, beyond this advantage, it is hard to see what practical result they expect from the manner in which they are conducting the siege. I have commented often before now on the extraordinary character of their fire; to-day they poured what a French acquaintance of mine called a "feu d'enfer" upon the works for a couple of hours. Now they have stopped as suddenly as they began, and have thus given time for the Danes to repair their fortifications in peace. So it has been every day; the Prussians, in fact, follow the example of Penelope after a fashion of their own, and allow the web they have unwoven by day to be rewoven by night. Not only so, but the object of their fire is as uncertain as its duration. It is obvious to the most ignorant in such matters that earth-works, or even a town itself, cannot be destroyed by a few casual shells, but that the bombardment of any point, to be effective, must be sustained for a length of time. Yet, in spite of this self-evident truth, the Prussians keep throwing their shells now at one place, now at

another, with no apparent plan. For a quarter of an hour they will fire at the works; then they seem to get tired of producing no visible effect, turn their guns upon the town, and amuse themselves with knocking down a house. After this interlude of diversion, they try to concentrate their attention on serious business, but, like children, they grow weary of the task before it is completed. Last night a purposeless engagement took place, in accordance with this indecisive system of action. Two companies of Prussians advanced from Dybbol village, drove in the Danish outpost, and occupied some of their rifle-pits. The alarm was sounded; the Danes turned out, expecting that an assault was at hand; and then the Prussians retired, being apparently satisfied with having disturbed the night's rest of their enemy.

The army is rapidly accommodating itself to the inconveniences occasioned by the sudden bombardment of Sonderborg. Considerable blame, I think, attaches to the military authorities, inasmuch as they had made no preparations whatever for an eventuality so extremely possible, if not probable. Had the Prussians assaulted the works of Dybbol while everything was in confusion

during the height of the bombardment, they would have done so, to say the least, under very favourable circumstances. That this was not done is no merit of the besieged. However, the danger is happily past, and everybody is shaking down again into his place. The misery of the hundreds of families driven out of their homes is perhaps only beginning in reality; but still, for the present, they have either got away from the island or found shelter in its more distant parts. Great numbers have fled across to Fünen, and the harbour of Hörup is half emptied of the vast flotilla of fishing smacks which lay at anchor there, with the white pennant floating at their masthead to secure them from the fire of the Prussian batteries as they tack across the bay. Riding over the island to-day, I met but few of the dreary processions of homeless families which were so frequent during the first two days after the bombardment. But two long strings of vans were still engaged in carting away furniture from Sonderborg. The articles of value had gone first, and the loads I met were composed of the poorest and commonest household goods. The wonder was that a little town of four thousand people could

have possessed such an infinite amount of furniture. The shopkeepers are opening new stores at Augustenburg, and the spirit of the army remains undaunted.

DAYS OF WAITING.

April 8.

Never was there, I should think, a contest waged on more unequal conditions than that which is now being carried on between the Danes and the Germans. I have no doubt that the Prussians before Dybbol have some disadvantages peculiar to themselves. They have no town close to their intrenchments, as the Danes had till the other day at Sonderborg; and it is probable that a large portion of their army has had to sleep habitually under canvas, or even in the open air. If any faith whatever is to be placed in the reports of scouts and deserters, the amount of sickness in the camp of the besiegers has been relatively much greater than in that of the besieged. The Danes, too, are carrying on the war amidst a population which, if only passively friendly, is certainly not hostile, while the Germans have found the in

habitants of Northern Schleswig, if not actively hostile, assuredly not friendly to their cause. Both armies are well fed and clothed, and the Danes have doubtless suffered less from the inclemency of the weather than their adversaries, who are not acclimatised to this most trying of climates. We are now well on into April, yet the weather would be cold for an English January. The sun is powerful enough, but the wind comes fresh from the Arctic regions, without the chill being taken off. In the shade it freezes all day long; the ground is as hard as iron under foot; the ponds and ditches are coated over with ice; and every few hours a pelting snow-storm comes on, powdering the whole face of the country with a layer of snow.

Still, making all allowance for the difficulties under which the Germans suffer equally with, if not to a greater degree than, the Danes, the balance of the account is heavily in favour of the Prussians. With regard to mere numbers, the enemy, according to the lowest calculation, has four men in the field for every one of the Danes. He has behind him almost unlimited reserves, from which he can make good his losses; while the re-

cruiting powers of Denmark are pretty well exhausted. If he could purchase the life of each Danish soldier by the loss of two of his own, the exchange would be an advantageous one as far as the prospects of the war are concerned. In arms, artillery, means of transport, money, and all the matériel of war, he is infinitely superior to his antagonist. Even under the most favourable circumstances, the position of a besieger is always pleasanter than that of the besieged. The initiative, the power of action, the direction of the campaign—the *beau rôle*, in fact, of the drama—rest with the Germans. If the weather is inclement, or the ammunition has run short, or the men seem tired, the Prussians can virtually suspend operations, and wait till a more favourable conjuncture arrives. The Danes can have no respite of this kind: at any moment they are liable to be attacked; they must always be on the alert, always waiting for the blow to fall. A cannonade a little brisker than usual—an apparent commotion at the outposts — is sufficient to disturb the whole army from its hard-earned rest. The same rule would apply, though in a less measure, to the besiegers, if they were exposed to the risk of

sudden "sorties." I should be sorry to say that such an event were impossible, but still it has never happened hitherto ; and though the Prussians must be, and doubtless are, prepared for its occurrence, the danger with them is a possible, but not a probable one. Except on the two or three occasions when the Germans have chosen to force on an engagement, their troops are exposed to no constant danger. Their artillery is so superior, that they can fire at a safe distance, and can take the lives of their enemies without exposing their own. It would be folly to blame them for this, or call them cowards because they make the best use of their material advantages. War is not now—even if it ever was, which I greatly doubt—a matter of chivalry. If the Prussians can place their guns out of range of the Danish batteries, they are morally bound to do so ; but there is no particular heroism in firing off guns from a position of safety. Moreover, the Prussians have the enormous advantage of being upon the winning side. Given the present condition of the two combatants, the fall of Dybbol is a mere question of time. It is, I believe, an axiom of military science, that any fortress, whose garrison is unable or unwilling to

disturb the besiegers by "sorties," must be captured sooner or later; and there is nothing in the position of Dybbol to make it an exception to this law. The utmost the Danes either can or do hope for, is to fight out a losing battle long enough for the chapter of accidents to come to their rescue. The soldiers have no prospect of victorious marches, of triumphant entries into conquered cities, of plunder, and spoil, and glory, to cheer up their spirits. All they have to pray for is to fall one by one, score by score, company by company, slowly enough to keep back the advance of the enemy for a few days or weeks, or it may be months longer. It is not even in the open field, in the mad excitement of battle, that they can hope to fall; but behind trenches, and on the bare hill-side, killed by an unseen enemy, whom they are powerless to assault in turn. Not a bright prospect, surely, to animate men on the eve of death.

Unless you appreciate this fact fully, it is impossible to do justice to the courage of this gallant people. All that the Danish soldier has to do now is to lie in the trenches and wait for death. Every other evening, about dusk, the troops relieve each other at the batteries and along the

various camps and posts on the eastern slope of Dybbol Hill. The relieving companies have to march from their country quarters through the deserted town of Sonderborg, across the open bridges, and up the exposed hill-side. From the moment they have crossed the summit of Sonderborg Hill they are under fire. This "via dolorosa," as it may well be called, extends for a matter of two long miles, up and down steep slopes, and over broken ground. With the irregular, spasmodic, wandering fire of the enemy, it is impossible to say at any moment when or at what point the shower of shells may begin to fall. It is difficult for the dense serried masses of soldiers to move at a rapid pace; it is as impossible for them to find shelter in such large numbers. If the whirring sound of a shell is heard, there is nothing to be done except to march on stoically during the long-protracted seconds that elapse before its explosion, trusting that it may fall out of harm's way. Of course, the chances are immensely in the troops' favour as against any individual shell, and every possible advantage is taken of the undulations of the ground; but still the element of danger cannot possibly be eliminated. When at last the soldiers

have reached their destination, they have to seek the comparative shelter of some mound, or trench, or hillock: there, for long hours of day and night, they lie on damp straw, or on the frost-bitten earth, hearing the shells whizzing over their heads or exploding round them, with no change to their monotony except when a killed or wounded comrade is borne past them from the front. Weary with cold, fatigue, and watching, they wait out their appointed time, and then have to retrace their anxious journey back to the country quarters, where they arrive jaded, worn out, and yet still patient. It is the troops I have observed coming fresh from rest and marching into danger who shout and sing, not those coming home out of it. A harder trial to an enemy's courage cannot well be imagined; it could not be stood better than by these Danish soldiers. It would be easy for them to desert from the outposts if they were so minded, as the Prussian sentries stand within sight and hail; but deserters have been very rare hitherto, and the few there have been were almost exclusively South Schleswigers. Whenever the time comes for departure, the men fall into their ranks steadily, if without enthusiasm, and march forward with a stout, firm step, never pushing on

recklessly, but never loitering behind. Every day the number of men killed and wounded at the front and on the march to and fro, though not absolutely considerable, is still large enough to bring home the fact of the danger to every man in the army. But no hesitation is visible on the part of the soldiers: they look tired, and dirt-soiled, and weary, but it is their duty to advance when the order comes, and from that duty they never think of shrinking.

It has been my fortune, within the last few days, to live in the close neighbourhood of some of the country quarters of the Danish army. Troops quieter or better behaved than these peasant-soldiers no other nation could produce; whether they ever change their clothes I have reason to doubt, and tidiness is not their strongest feature. All night, and most of the day, they sleep in the straw; when they are awake, they smoke constantly, except when they are eating. Brown bread, fat pork, and milk compose the bulk of their meals, which they take hours in preparing, and hours more in eating. Drinking never seems to be carried to excess amongst them; and indeed the landlord of their quarters tells me that a great part of their pay is spent on the purchase of fresh

milk, which to them is almost a necessity of life. I cannot perceive, even, that they are addicted to the other frailty of most armies, or make hot love to the girls about the farm; they do not read much, and I have hardly ever seen them playing at cards; but then a great portion of their empty time—which, with eating and sleeping, is not long—is taken up in writing letters. These epistles are composed, as it were, in common; and every writer appears to have the assistance of half-a-dozen comrades in suggesting what he should say, and how he ought to put it. Indeed, the correspondence of the army must be enormous. I was present this morning at a postal delivery, and, I should think, out of a hundred men, fully a third got letters. It was curious to watch the eagerness with which the lucky owners ran up as their names were called over by the sergeant. But when they had got their letters they proceeded to enjoy the pleasure with due deliberation. They first looked at the superscription, and read it carefully a dozen times over; then they inspected the seal, and turned it round, so as to view it in every direction; and then, with extreme caution, they cut the letter open with large clasp-knives, taking care to leave the seal

intact. When they had accomplished all these preliminary ceremonies, they placed the epistles in their pockets unread, till a more convenient opportunity should arrive for their perusal. The officers have hardly much more to do than the men. Drilling never appears to have been carried on with much attention in the Danish army, and even if it had been, the men, while in country quarters, have too much need of rest to be disturbed unnecessarily. So the officers kill time as best they can; they read the papers, play on the piano, stroll a little—a very little—about the farm premises, sleep a good deal in bed, and doze still more upon the chairs and sofas of the sitting-room; talking occasionally, and waking up in earnest towards meal times. Even amongst them, as far as I have seen, playing at cards is rare, and gambling, in the real sense of the word, quite unknown. It is not a pleasant feeling, even to a comparative stranger like myself, when the time comes for the departure to the front. Here are men you have been for hours living with, laughing with, and talking to as friends, and yet you know there is a chance—not altogether a remote one—that the cordial shake of the hand they give



you in parting may be a farewell one for ever. As a matter of routine, they go forth to their duty; and when they come home, after the hours of service are over, they seldom talk about their adventures, but take them as things which need no comment. It is so, I fancy, more or less in every army, but more so in the Danish than in any other. It would be impossible to encounter danger with more outward indifference than is exhibited by the men amongst whom I live; it is not that they are indifferent to its reality, but that the sense of duty reigns paramount.

April 9.

It is a strange life which we, the scant and few spectators of the bombardment of Dybbol, have now to lead. Any day, any hour almost, may bring things to a crisis. Every night we expect to be woke up, before daybreak comes, by the sound of the alarm; any morning we know it to be doubtful where we shall sleep at night. My bags are ready packed for immediate departure; when I undress myself before going to bed, I carefully put within reach the half-dozen articles I must needs carry away with me, if we should have

to run for it at a moment's notice. But indeed it must be a short and sharp summons that would not give me time to gather up the few possessions which I still own in Alsen. Most of my luggage "went under," as Yankees say, in my flight from Sonderborg: shirts, collars, linen of every kind, had to be left to the mercy of the elements. If they have not been already devoured by the flames, they have certainly been drenched by the rain, which has pelted down through the shell-battered roof of the room wherein I used to dwell. At any rate, I shall see them no more; clean linen and I have bidden each other a long farewell; even my soap deserted me in the hour of need. I have one shirt left, and one only—that in which I write to you now—in which I have slept for so many nights that I am afraid to count them—in which I shall have to sleep for, I am still more afraid to think, how many nights yet. My collars have been turned and re-turned till it is impossible to say which side is the least dirty. My handkerchiefs have ceased to be presentable; my boots are wearing out at the toes; and my coat is getting shaky at the elbows, ragged about the cuffs. If this goes on much longer, I shall

have to wear my ambassadorial fur coat, and conceal by its outward grandeur the absence of all under-clothing. There is no possibility of refitting myself unless I leave the island. Sonderborg was the one emporium of Als, and Sonderborg is no more. Every shop is empty, most of the stores have been burnt, and what are left have been carried far away to safe quarters. In all Augustenburg, Ducal residence as it was, there is not a shop except an apothecary's and a pork-butcher's. By a fortunate meeting with an itinerant pedlar, I have managed to secure two pair of worsted socks, and a gorgeous, flaring pocket-handkerchief which would madden a drove of bulls, and bears upon it a pictorial representation of a railway train, a triumphal arch, and a galaxy of flags. These are treasures indeed; but the pedlar's stock is exhausted, and there is no prospect of its being replenished. Still, dirt is a calamity I am, fortunately, able to bear with philosophy; cleanliness is, after all, only a matter of comparison. In the kingdom of the blind, according to the French proverb, the one-eyed is king; and in a place where everybody is dirty, and ragged, and out at elbows, the possession of a pocket-handkerchief

and a fur coat constitutes a relative splendour of apparel. Everything depends upon the point of view from which you regard it. I find that a friend of mine, who was present with me the other day, when a shell struck the ground unpleasantly near to us, has described his own demeanour to his acquaintances as being that of dignified composure; to my eyes I recollect he bore the aspect of a stock-fish with its mouth open. So, in like manner, what you would consider dirt in London, I may be disposed to regard as elegance in Sonderborg.

As far as my quarters are concerned, I have no cause to complain. I am excellently fed—overfed in fact, for we breakfast at nine, have luncheon at eleven, dine at two, and sup at eight, and each meal is most substantial. In company with a friend, I occupy a room where I can read and write and sleep in quiet; the only objection to it being that, in order to reach it, I have to go through two kitchens and an outhouse, and have to stumble over a score of soldiers, who are always sleeping in the straw at the foot of the winding staircase which leads up to my abode. One special advantage of my quarters, which my kind

landlord expatiated upon when he first showed me the room, is that, if the enemy should come in by the front door during the night, I can let myself down from the windows on to the heaps of farm-yard straw which is piled outside. But my real objection to our present mode of life is its exceeding monotony. I thought Sonderborg dull enough, but the unfortunate little town was a Paris compared with the farmhouse where I have been lucky enough to find shelter. There, at any rate, were always new faces about the streets, the sight of troops moving backwards and forwards, and acquaintances to speak to at any moment. But our tiny world is completely broken up. We are all scattered over the island miles away from each other, along rough cross-country roads; and the round to head-quarters, to the post, and the telegraph-office takes up the best part of the morning. Yet I am better off in this respect than any one else I know. The sea-shore lies within five minutes' walk; and if anything happens at the front, I can get a sight of what is going on from positions which command the maximum of view with the minimum of risk. In truth, the area over which I can wander is now sadly circum-

scribed. To cross the bridges is, as a rule, to expose yourself to an utterly useless danger, and the whole hill-side of Dybbol is carefully eschewed, except by those who go there reluctantly on military duty. All day long, shells are cast haphazard, as it seems, from the enemy's batteries, over every part of the hill, and there is scarcely a spot where it is safe to stand out of cover. Sonderborg itself is deserted. There is nothing to see in its bare walls, and roofless houses, and silent streets; and if you had a fancy for wandering amidst its ruins, you are very likely to be knocked down by the shells which come whirring from time to time across the bay from Broagerland, crashing the crumbling dwellings about your ears. At evening, when the fire almost always dies out, I sometimes make my way by a long circuit to the upper part of the town, where sundry officers of my acquaintance are stationed. Hitherto this part of the town, which lies on the further or inland side of the hill, has escaped any serious injury, chiefly, I suspect, because the elevation required to carry shells above the crest of the hill would subject the Prussian cannon on the Wemming Bund shores to a severer test than their gunners

like to resort to. In this "Haute-Ville" of Sonderborg the shops are closed, and the houses almost deserted. Still there are one or two pot-houses, or "Bevaertnings" as they are called, kept open for the service of the soldiers encamped near the town; and there I sometimes come across old acquaintances loafing disconsolately about the half-closed tap-rooms. Inland, of course, I could walk or ride for miles; but in the present conjuncture of affairs it is not advisable to stray far away from the front. Any hour the engagement might begin, and any hour it might become necessary to shift my quarters; so for the most part I hang about the shore, or the farm-yard where my tent is pitched for the time. There is too, within half a mile, a long beech wood, running down to the sea; there much of my time is spent. There are no leaves upon the trees, scarcely a bud yet upon the bushes; but the bare white trunks stand so near together, and the canopy of boughs is interlaced so closely overhead, that one is pretty well sheltered both from wind and rain. And here I stroll about the low sandy bluffs watching the white puffs of smoke as the shells dart to and fro between Dybbol and Broagerland. Then I have

daily to ride from ten to twenty miles in search of the letters and newspapers, without which our existence would be unbearable. Since the evacuation of Sonderborg the post has been flitting about in every direction. By one of those cumbrous arrangements due to a want of organising power, very conspicuous in all Danish arrangements, there are two places where letters are delivered: Augustenburg and Hörup-Haf; and in the former place there are two post-offices. Practically, our letters lie indifferently at each of these three depôts; and as the two towns are five miles distant from each other and from the farm where I reside, I have to make my way in search of letters over a long stretch of ground. Happily, I have got a sort of qualified ownership in a friend's horse, and my ride, as amateur postman, is not the least pleasant part of the day. If the weather were only warm, my life here would be tolerable enough; but then—nothing is perfect in this bad world—if the weather *were* warm, my shirt would be intolerable.

To understand at all our existence, you must suppose it to be passed amidst a constant accompaniment of shells. The first sound I hear when

I wake in the morning, the last before I go to sleep at night, is the boom of cannon. We talk of nothing else and think of nothing else, except whether the shelling is faster or slower than usual, and what progress the enemy is making. Every day, and often many times in the day, we have arrivals at our quarters of officers just come in from the front, and from these I hear constant accounts of the state of affairs. I cannot think that particulars of such a nature can be of any interest to non-Danish readers. Whether the name of the corporal who lost his arm yesterday was Hansen, or Petersen, or Rasmussen—one of the three it is almost certain to have been—or whether the gun whose muzzle was knocked clean off stood in battery A, B, or C, are not matters of importance, as far as the outer public is concerned. It is only, therefore, of the broad features of the siege that I wish to speak. This much may be justly said, that the final struggle seems growing daily nearer and nearer. The Prussian fire has improved in accuracy, or, at any rate, the ranges of the different positions are now better known; the circular chain of batteries which is to surround the foot of Dybbol Hill is rapidly approaching com-

pletion. There are now fourteen, or some say sixteen batteries, in position at different points between Avn-Bierg on the Wemming Bund and Sand-Bierg on the Als-Sund. Yesterday afternoon, we had two or three hours of the heaviest firing we have yet known; the roar of cannon was almost continuous; and its severity may be judged from the fact that upwards of 1,500 shells were thrown close round Dybbol windmill, with the object of setting fire to the farm-buildings which surround it. At last the attempt was successful, and a dense cloud of smoke rose from straw-roofs, and covered the whole crest of the hill. Strange to say, the windmill itself, though its sides are thatched, did not catch fire, and still stands erect in defiance of the enemy. The centre batteries suffered more severely than they have done yet; but, fortunately, the fire was much slackened after nightfall, and the Danes have been able to repair the injuries inflicted.

To-day the fire has been much less constant, possibly because the whole country is covered with a rainy mist. But the belief amongst all the officers here is that the attack cannot be much longer delayed.

April 10.

Will the Conference be followed by an immediate armistice? This is the one political question that occupies the thoughts of all persons here who trouble themselves to think of anything but the immediate occurrences of the hour. Before this letter reaches you, the question will have been decided. I trust, most sincerely, in the affirmative.

If it were thought possible to hold Dybbol with security, the idea of any armistice which left the Germans in occupation of what they now possess would be rejected with indignation. When I first came here, the belief in the practical impregnability of Dybbol was very prevalent. Having seen the resources of both armies, it is an impression which I never shared; and I have not hesitated to express the conviction that, whenever the Germans choose to exert their overwhelming superiority in real earnest, the capture of the Danish position is a mere question of time. This impression has of late made way rapidly amongst the more moderate of the Danes, officers as well as civilians. This change of sentiment is certainly not owing to any

shortcomings on the part of the Danish soldiers ; on the contrary, these peasant levies have shown a courage, a patience, and a power of endurance, of which the best trained troops of any nation in the world might well be proud. What has weighed down, what is weighing down, and what must weigh down, the besieged army, is its immense inferiority in numbers, and in the efficiency of artillery. "It is not a quarrel," says the Latin poet, "where you beat and I am beaten!" it is not a battle where one party fires and the other is fired at; yet such is virtually the contest which is being waged between Germany and Denmark. Short as the line of Dybbol is, its defence requires all, and more than all, the troops which the Government of Copenhagen can place at the disposal of General Gerlach. There are not soldiers enough to assume the offensive: to act on the defensive is all that the Danes can do, or hope to do. Strange to say, the Prussians are allowed to pursue the erection of their trenches, and parallels, and batteries, with but little molestation from the besieged. I know, indeed, that orders not to fire upon earthworks in course of formation within range, and full in view of Danish batteries,

have created much wonderment, not to use a stronger term, amongst the officers. But the general impression seems to be that the whole resources and energies of the Danish army must be reserved to repel the enemy whenever he attempts to carry the works by storm. There must, however, be at last an end to a conflict so unequal. Every day that passes weakens the Danes by casualties in the field, and still more by the constant watching and hardships to which their soldiers are exposed. The amount of sickness in the camp is very great, and for another month there is no prospect of any lasting improvement in the climate.

Under these circumstances the Danes are fighting a losing battle. How much longer they can hold out is a question about which it is impossible to form an opinion: so much depends, not only on the accidents of war, but on the vigour with which the Germans prosecute the siege, and on sacrifices they are prepared to make for the accomplishment of their object. When I was in Flensburg ten weeks ago, the German officers were confident that three days would not elapse before Dybbol were in their possession; yet the

works remain untaken, and are undoubtedly stronger than they were at the commencement of February. It is, therefore, idle to predict how much longer the defence may not be maintained. Enough already has been done to vindicate the honour of the Danish army, and the question is now one of political expediency, not of professional military dignity.

Meanwhile, if the Prussians are, as their newspapers stated, to enter the Conference as the conquerors of Alsen, they must make haste about their work. To-day an assault was confidently expected, and this morning the bombardment was very brisk for a couple of hours. It has died away again, however, and no forward movement is yet reported.

8 P.M.

The firing from the new Prussian batteries has been carried on all the afternoon with great vigour. At one time the number of shells averaged fifteen a minute. The Danish batteries have replied but little. A dense fog has set in, so that it is impossible to see anything or even to distinguish clearly the quarter from which the

sounds come. We could discern, during an interval, when the fog partially cleared off, that Dybbol windmill has at last been struck down, but its stump still remains erect.

April 12.

In ordinary years, these two last days ought to have been glad ones in this island of Alsen. The long, dreary winter has broken at last, and the spring has burst upon us in all its freshness. We may have snow-storms yet, and the ponds may be frozen again, as they were three days ago, but the winter tide is on its ebb, and the summer well-nigh at hand. How delicious is the first sensation of warmth, you must have shivered for months in a northern winter in order to understand. The fire is out, and I am writing by an open window, breathing in the fresh, soft air; the sun is shining brightly; the birds are chirping merrily; the young lambs have been turned out for the first time from their winter shelter, and are bleating in the fields. The dogs about the farm-yard are basking sleepily in the sunlight; and the bushes underneath my window have

covered themselves, as it were in a single night, with festoons of green leaves.

Yet, though all nature is glad, this outburst of spring brings no gladness for the defenders of Alsen. Never during the siege have I witnessed so much depression in the army as during the last three days. The dispersion of the camp at Sonderborg has in itself operated unfavourably on the spirits of the soldiers. As long as the little town remained the head-quarters, the troops were cheered by each other's company, and by the consciousness that they formed part of a force which, however small compared to that of its enemies, was still considerable in itself. Now that the whole army is dispersed in small detachments over the country, these sources of encouragement have vanished. The men hang about their dull quarters, waiting listlessly for the time to come when it is their turn to go under fire, and brood constantly upon the forlornness of their position and the dreariness of their prospects. No army could be subjected to such a trial without injury; the wonder is that that injury has been, as yet, so trifling. The Prussians have at last adopted a plan of action, and have stuck to it

with dogged pertinacity. That plan consists in hurling a continuous shower of shells on the Danish batteries, and on the eastern slopes of Dybbol Hill. For the last forty hours especially the fire has been incessant. Even at the moment when I write, the sound of the shells is like that of an axe striking a tree with continuous blows. Stroke follows stroke with monotonous regularity. If there is a moment's interval of quiet, it is followed by a cannonade of redoubled violence, till lost time has been made up for, and then the firing subsides into its wonted order. The whole base of Dybbol Hill is encircled with a range of batteries, and every day the number is increased, and the chain more tightly drawn. Thus the different lines of fire intersect each other at every angle, and the shells fall like hailstones over the whole width and breadth of the Danish encampment. At first the number of shots was noted carefully; but now that the fire has become continuous, all count has been lost, and only a vague surmise can be formed of the rate at which the bombardment has been carried on. This morning, at a period when the fire seemed more slack than usual, I counted a hundred shells in a little

under a quarter of an hour, and during the hottest part of the engagement, I have no doubt that as many as a thousand projectiles were thrown from the Prussian batteries in the course of each hour. I have spoken before now of what seemed to me the apparent inaccuracy of this never-ceasing fire ; and though the Danish officers are astounded at the excellence of the Prussian practice, it is still evident to me that, in reality, the precision with which a shot can be directed against a given object falls far short of what it ought to be by the theory of gunnery. As I mentioned before, I think, fifteen hundred shells had to be thrown before the enemy could succeed in knocking down a windmill on the very crest of the hill ; and the injury done to the batteries, prominent as they are, has been comparatively slight ; the shells constantly bury themselves in the earth without exploding, and even when they explode against the breastworks the quantity of earth displaced is seldom very great.

Unfortunately, to dismount the guns, or silence the batteries, or to remove the obstacles in the way of storming the works, does not appear to be the present object of the enemy. His plan is to make

the hill-side utterly untenable, to render access to the front from the island so dangerous as to be impossible, and to force the Danes to abandon their position and retire from Dybbol. How far this scheme is likely to be successful, it is hard to say, and as yet I fancy the military authorities of the army are as ignorant on the subject as I am myself. All I can say is that the test to which the courage and perseverance of the Danes are put is one which human strength or resolution cannot, I think, endure for long. At the risk of repeating myself, I must, in justice to the Danes, impress upon you what are the conditions they have now to struggle against. "Submit" would perhaps be a more correct word than "struggle," for the worst of their lot is that it is entirely passive. There is nothing, literally nothing, they can do; they are not numerous enough to make a sortie; and, brave even as the soldiers are, they lack that dash and discipline combined which would enable them to charge the enemy with much prospect of success. Their own batteries are perforce almost silent. If a single shot is fired, it is answered by a perfect torrent of shells from the Prussian guns, and the mere fact of firing indicates with fatal accuracy

the position where the Danish cannon are placed, and entails a certain retaliation. Practically, the only thing to be done is to reserve the fire for the decisive moment, whose speedy advent every Danish soldier prays for eagerly. Nothing can be worse than this resistless cannonade. Extreme accuracy of aim is no object to the Prussians now; the more widely their shells are strewn over the whole hill-side, the better for them. The enemy is so close at hand, that if he chooses he can advance to the attack with but a few minutes' warning. It is essential, therefore, for the Danes to keep a very large force within easy reach of the batteries, in addition to the troops required to man the long chain of earthworks. In other words, as long as the crest of the hill is the Danish line of defence, a great portion of this small army, and almost all its artillery, must be kept on the Schleswig side of the Sund, that is, on the slopes of Dybbol Hill. Now the object of the Prussians is to make every man in that force feel that at no time and in no place is he safe from destruction. That object has been pretty well attained. There is not a field, or house, or hollow where shells have not fallen. As soon as the different stations can

be reached, the soldiers shelter themselves behind trenches, and slopes, and hedges, and there they are in comparative safety; but the safety is only comparative after all. There these gallant fellows lie patiently for long dreary hours; they have to wait there till the alarm sounds, or till a shell comes crashing in amongst them; then the mangled bodies of their comrades are carted silently away, and the survivors crowd closer together, waiting for the next dread summons. It is not a battle, but a slaughter, a "battue" of human beings. It is impossible to sleep or walk about, or to stir from shelter, till at last the hour comes for the men to be relieved; and then they have to march homewards over the bare roads, across the open bridges, and up the narrow streets, along a line of route shelled upon constantly from the enemy's batteries. The march to and from the front is more perilous than the sojourn there, but the mere fact of movement more than compensates for the additional danger. Of course, the chances are immensely in favour of each individual soldier escaping without injury—if not, the maintenance of the position would be impossible; yet the casualties of each day are

as great as those in a serious engagement, and constitute no slight loss for so small an army. Without excitement, without warning, without power of firing a shot or striking a blow in return, man after man is knocked down, maimed, or killed. When a shell bursts, the fragments explode far and near, carrying death with them. What the actual numbers of killed and wounded on any one day may be, it is impossible to tell as yet; but, from what I hear, I should put it down as not less than a hundred. There is one field-battery, with which I am well acquainted, which has just passed four-and-twenty hours at the front. One man and two horses killed, two men severely wounded and one slightly, and two cannon out of eight destroyed—this is the list of its casualties, and I have no reason to suppose it to be an unusually heavy one. I have this moment heard that the officer in command of the field-battery which went out to replace the one I have mentioned was struck by a shell on his way to the front, and is severely wounded. The mode, too, of death is singularly horrible to the bystanders. When a man falls in battle struck by a rifle shot, there is little beyond the fact of death to shock

the nerves; but here it is different: men are literally blown into fragments, and disfigured in the most awful manner. A shell fell yesterday amongst a party of five men standing near a bridge. Three escaped unhurt: but according to their statement, the two others had disappeared, and all they could find was a number of limbs scattered in the bushes round. The story may be—probably is—exaggerated, but it is not impossible. Yesterday morning, as the fire was for the time directed solely against the works, I ventured into the town, and happened to be by the church as they were bringing the dead bodies in from the front. The dreary procession was almost over when I reached the spot, but still there was one waggon as yet unloaded. The carts drew up at the entrance of the churchyard, and there men were waiting with stretchers, which they placed alongside the conveyance. A couple of soldiers got into the waggon, and threw out, one by one, the knapsack, the musket, and the powder-flask of the dead man, which were carried off to the dépôt; and then they took up roughly, though not irreverently, a bundle, so it seemed, of charred clothes and discoloured flesh and clotted blood,

and, swinging it by the head and legs, lowered it upon the stretcher; then an arm and the stump of a foot followed piecemeal, and the ghastly burden was carried into the church. As the stretcher passed me I caught sight of the man's head. That the head of a human being, alive but a few hours before, could look like what I saw, I could not have believed. The features were utterly indistinguishable; the skin was that of a mummy, thousands of years old, smeared over with blood; and yet, in spite of the disfigurement of the face, there was upon it an expression, so it seemed to me, of unutterable terror, which has haunted me ever since. Fancy the effect that such an object must have produced, carried through ranks of men who know that the same fate might await them at any moment, and then remember that such spectacles are of hourly occurrence.

In defiance of all this, the Danish soldiers still go forth dauntlessly to take their place at the works. There is not much of singing now; but the men march forward silently and resolutely. I saw yesterday some soldiers freshly arrived, who were quite excited at the prospect of going under fire. "Oh," said an officer to me, by whom I was

standing, "after a couple of days they will lose all their gaiety, but they will go on just the same." So it is: there is to me something touching and grand in the aspect of these Danish regiments as they move on boldly towards their appointed place. As they pass their comrades returning homewards and greet them with a cheer, they might repeat with truth the saying of the old Roman gladiators, the famous "*Morituri te saluant.*" They are going "into the jaws of death"—going to be slaughtered helplessly by an unseen enemy—and yet hitherto no reluctance to advance has been manifested. Their courage does not spring from the passive obedience of the Russian, or the fatalism of Eastern nations, or the reckless daring of French soldiers. They go out to die, much as Englishmen might do, because it is their duty to obey, without murmuring, but not without questioning. Amongst the officers the wisdom of exposing the army to this helpless slaughter is gravely questioned. On Sunday a council of war was held, at which it was determined to hold Dybbol to the last; but if this fire should be continued, no courage in the world can hold out indefinitely. Each day the danger of the position

grows greater. Already officers state openly that the army is being sacrificed to the wilful obstinacy of the populace at Copenhagen. Much of this talk, no doubt, simply represents the impatience of the moment; but it also indicates a feeling which may ultimately influence the fate of the campaign. The almost universal belief entertained, or at any rate professed, by military men here, is that Alsen can be defended after Dybbol is captured or abandoned. It is a belief I have never shared; and my own opinion is that if an armistice could be obtained by which the Prussians took Dybbol, while the Danes were allowed to hold the island, it would be the best prospect that Denmark could hope for. Before, however, you receive this letter I fancy that, one way or other, the question must be decided; the present conjuncture of affairs cannot last for many days longer.

April 13.

All last night the firing was incessant. So ceaseless was it, that I, one of the soundest of sleepers, was constantly woke up by the dull, heavy booming of the artillery. According as the

fitful wind shifted, the sound faded away, or grew so loud and distinct that it was difficult to believe shells were not bursting close to the house where I was sheltered. About midnight, a gentleman who shares my room with me roused me up to say he was certain a shell had fallen in the farmyard, and proposed that we should go out and see what was the matter. However, as it was pitch dark, and not a soul was stirring in the house, it seemed to me that we had much better lie still and wait till we heard somebody else moving. It turned out that I was right, and that the noise we—or rather he—had been startled out of sleep by was occasioned by the explosion of a powder magazine in one of the Dybbol forts. This morning the fire has been comparatively slack, and what there was has been directed against the town. A building close to the parish church was set on fire, but the conflagration has not spread. It is strange how difficult it seems to be to burn down the town. As all the houses are built with woodwork frames, and many of the roofs are of thatch, I should have thought beforehand, that a conflagration once kindled would have laid all the city in ashes in a few hours' time. This has not

been the case, though we have now had a dozen large fires in different parts of Sonderborg. The explanation I take to be, that there are numbers of open spaces, gardens, orchards, and yards between the houses, and that the streets are too broad, and the dwellings too low, for a strong draught of air to be created. At present, the destruction of the deserted place by fire would be rather a gain than otherwise to the Danes. As I am speaking of the bombardment, I may as well say here that some of the English papers, while condemning most justly the conduct of the Prussians, appear to me to spoil their case by confounding two completely different issues. It is absurd to blame the Prussians for bombarding the town at all. Assuming that they are justified in making war, they are authorized to carry on the war in the most efficient manner; and there can be no question that they have materially improved their position by shelling the Danes out of a town which was of extreme value for the defence of Dybbol. Much in the same way, I do not condemn them for recommencing the bombardment from time to time, so as to hinder the Danes from returning to their quarters. The one fact for

which I hold them guilty of the gravest condemnation is, that they bombarded a city filled with women, children, and non-combatants of every kind *without the slightest notice or intimation*. Six hours' delay could not have entailed the least damage to the besiegers; they are not even able to plead the excuse that they intended to storm the position during the confusion created by an unexpected bombardment of the city. The only attempt at palliation of the offence I have heard put forward is, that the Danes had previously declined to accede to a request of the Prussians not to bombard Dybbol church, which was used as a hospital for the German wounded soldiers. I have not been able to ascertain whether there is any foundation for this story; but, even if true, the excuse is a most impotent one. The church stands directly in front of the Danish batteries, and is surrounded by earthworks the Prussians have themselves thrown up. If the Germans deliberately chose to use a building for an hospital lying at the foot of the Danish batteries, while they have scores of villages in the rear completely out of range, they could not reasonably expect the Danes to cease from firing at a spot from

which a cannonade was being directed against Dybbol.

So, in like manner, cruel as I feel the system of warfare recently adopted by the Prussians to be towards the Danes, I cannot blame the Germans for it. If they believe they can shell the Danes out of Dybbol from a distance, without risking the cost of an attack by storm, I think they are right in sparing the lives of their own soldiers. There is no heroism in firing shells when you are safe out of harm's way; but also there is no cowardice in so doing, if you can effect the end of war by such a process. Still, in spite of one's better reason, there is something less revolting in ordinary acts of war than in this cold-blooded manner of dealing out death blindfold. The amount of the Danish loss each day is kept secret, but it must certainly be very heavy. Yesterday an officer who visited the works told me he saw six men killed by one shell, close to the spot where he was standing. A Danish major was struck dead this morning, while writing in his tent, by the explosion of a shell; two guardsmen working at the trenches were severely wounded. These are only a few accidents of the night's

work I have heard accidentally on my rambles to-day. I give them merely as samples of a score of similar events that are narrated as each division of troops returns from its duty at the front. I happened, when riding out early to-day, to meet the train of sick and wounded who were being brought down in carts to Hörup-Haf, in order to be shipped to Fünen or Copenhagen. I counted at least forty carts, averaging four soldiers in every cart. I am told a similar train comes daily from the hospitals at Augustenburg. If you add to the soldiers well enough to be removed the number of killed, and of men too severely wounded to bear removal, you will see at what a fearful rate the Danish army is being weakened by this murderous fire. Eight hundred men have arrived to-day from Fredericia to make up for the recent losses; but I am afraid that any reinforcements Denmark is in a position to send can only serve to prolong a hopeless struggle. The Danes are too brave to be used up as mere food for powder; and yet this is the only purpose that they now can serve.

The intelligence that the meeting of the Conference is adjourned for ten days has been

received with bitter disappointment. The reasons for the delay may be solid enough; but to men like the defenders of Alsen, fighting a battle becoming day by day more hopeless, each day's delay in the conclusion of an armistice is not only a protraction of their agony, but almost a death-blow to their prospect of escape. They receive the news with much the same feelings as Bluebeard's wife might have heard from Sister Anne that the brothers spurring to her rescue had stopped upon the road to bait their horses.

It is, I believe, impossible that the next ten days can pass without creating some material change in the present position of affairs at Dybbol, and that change one unfavourable to the Danes. This belief, at any rate, is the one entertained by the Danish officers. To add to their disappointment, they are gravely informed that, by the beginning of next June, Sweden will have her army encamped in her southern provinces. I recollect once being present in a company when the question was discussed, What would be the best thing to do if you saw a man drowning in a river? "The one thing," said a sententious

acquaintance of mine, "is for the man immersed to keep his head cool; so I should stand upon the bank and endeavour to divert his attention from his danger, by starting some indifferent topic of conversation." This, it strikes me, is the course of policy pursued by the bystanders toward Denmark in her death-struggle.

April 14.

One shell is very like another, and each day's record of events differs little from that of its fellows, except inasmuch as the number of shells is greater or smaller. The part of the besieged is now an entirely passive one; the troops can do nothing except lie behind the trenches, where they find an imperfect shelter, and wait till the Prussians can summon up resolution to complete their work. I calculated, the other day, that since Sunday last not less than 10,000 shells a day had been thrown from the enemy's batteries. According to an official statement now published at Copenhagen, the number amounted to 12,000. This estimate, however, is infinitely smaller than that given by the German papers. Last week, according to these reports, the position of Dybbol

was bombarded by 18 field batteries, with eight companies of heavy artillery, and each of their guns fired on an average 500 shots a day. There are eight guns in each Prussian field battery, and probably double that number in each company of heavy artillery; so that, if this statement be correct, 136,000 shots would have been discharged daily. This calculation is so palpably absurd, that I am disposed to think there is a mistake in the figures, and I take the real German account to be, that each gun was fired on an average fifty times in a day. If so, the Danish and Prussian estimates would agree tolerably well together. The Danish batteries have practically ceased replying. A score or two of shells have been fired daily, to show that the guns are not silenced, and the losses of the enemy amount daily to some half-dozen men.

I quote these facts to show how completely the contest is a one-sided one. Not only the initiative in the conflict, but the whole dictation of its progress, rests with the Prussians. To spectators on the island, the advance of the enemy appears vacillating, unsatisfactory, and slow. I doubt, however, whether it seems so to the troops en-

gaged in the defence at the front. For the last two days the fire has been much less frequent, and the common opinion is that the Prussians have exhausted their ammunition and are pausing for fresh supplies. This is a mere surmise, and one the truth of which I am inclined to doubt. The enemy has achieved the first object of the bombardment, that of reducing the batteries to silence. What actual damage has been done to the fortifications it is difficult to ascertain. Considerable injury, however, has been inflicted on the works on the left and in the centre of the Dybbol line; and what is more important, these injuries cannot easily be repaired. The Prussians are now so close, that they can see every movement of their enemy; and the moment working parties are discovered, such a shower of shells is poured upon them, that the attempt has to be abandoned. Under these circumstances, a cessation of fire is of little benefit to the besieged, except in as far as it revives the spirits of the army. In the night of Wednesday to Thursday the Prussians drove the Danes out of the rifle-pits in front of Battery No. 2, and an attempt to retake them was made without much energy, and was

not followed by success. The loss of the Danes on this occasion I have heard variously estimated at from 75 to 200 killed, wounded, and missing. In the last bulletin received here from the War Office in Copenhagen, the amount of loss on the previous day is not given, but is only stated in vague terms to be relatively less than on previous occasions; a statement which in itself is ominous. The Prussians are said to be erecting new batteries under cover of the captured rifle-pits, only four hundred yards distant from Fort No. 2, which hitherto has stood the brunt of the attack. Yesterday the chief fire of the enemy was turned against the Danish right. The newly-erected batteries of "Sürlökkege" shelled the northern side of Sonderborg and the approaches to the bridges, while those of Sand-Bierg fired across the Sund and burnt down the farm-houses that constitute the hamlet of Rönhave. The truth is, that the Prussians are pursuing the Anaconda strategy which General M'Clellan designed to carry out in the invasion of the Confederate States. The difference is, that, while the Federals had to surround in their coils a vast continent, the Germans have only to encircle a hill some couple of

miles in circumference. The issue cannot, I think, be doubtful ; and the marvel to me is, that the victim has struggled so long and so successfully against the gigantic force of his destroyer. Councils of war have been held daily, at which the question whether a new and superior line of defence should not be adopted has been discussed eagerly. Up to this time, however, the decision has been in favour of a determined resistance. About the wisdom of this decision it is not for me to judge. The evacuation of Dybbol involves, in my opinion, the probable surrender of Alsen ; but, on the other hand, an attempt to hold out against overwhelming odds entails a fearful and useless loss of life, and is merely a protraction of the nation's agony. As to the heroism of the resolution, there can be no manner of question.

Meanwhile, for observers and narrators of the siege like myself, there is nothing to be done except to wait wearily. Yet the minor incidents of this struggle are not undeserving, perhaps, of record. It is curious to note how not only the ordinary course of nature, but the ordinary tenour of daily life, goes on with but little alteration.

Seed-time has come round, and the labourers are ploughing and sowing the very fields in which shells fell yesterday, and over which armies may trample to-morrow in their advance or retreat. Great masses of smoke and flame on the right of the town spread over all the island the news that the farmhouses along the Sund have been burnt down by the enemy, and yet the inmates of the dwellings on the left, which are equally exposed to the fire, go on with their wonted duties, as if the time was one of complete peace and quiet. The great farm where I am quartered at this moment stands on a sort of debatable land between peace and war. Four hundred soldiers are stationed here, and the house is crowded to its very cupboards and closets with guests, amongst whom I and two brother correspondents are the only civilians. The house lies somewhat sheltered by the cliffs of the sea-coast, and there is no obvious reason why the Prussians should fire upon it. Still there is no material reason why they should not shell it if they think good; and their previous conduct has given little cause to hope that any consideration of humanity will restrain them from so doing. If the heights of Dybbol are

taken, and if any attempt should be made to defend Alsen, even long enough to allow the Danes to make good their retreat, then the doom of this large farm, its vast barns and stables and cow-houses, will be the same as that of Rönhave, which is now a mass of blackened ruins. Any moment a shell may be sent flying in our direction, and the signal may come for instantaneous departure; and yet, in spite of all this, the work of the farm-yard goes on, hour by hour, much as usual. The young children, it is true, have been sent away to a neighbouring village; but a little bright-eyed thing of two years old is still kept in the house, because her mother cannot bear to part with her. To-day, too, two little twins of this numerous family are to come over and see a newborn kid that has been promised them for months as their especial property. The dairymaids and women-servants keep on working about the premises, with a sublime indifference to the constant roar of cannon, though I am afraid their work is somewhat interfered with by the courtship of the soldiers, who idle all day long about the place. The ladies of the family go on with their household duties, cook the dinner, wait—I am ashamed

for the gallantry of the Danes to say—at table, and sew in the rare intervals of rest, as if the thought of danger had never crossed their imagination or disturbed their nerves. Even our host himself, whose property may be destroyed any day, seems to have no anxiety, except how to make us comfortable, and secure our having a great deal more to eat and drink than the small amount he has consented to receive in payment can be possibly supposed to cover. Otherwise one would not suppose from his manner or conversation that he had anything more than a casual spectator's interest in the question, whether his house and stock and property are to be destroyed or not. He is not a solitary instance of this to me almost inexplicable philosophy. I met yesterday a farmer who was going to see whether a fire visible in the distance did not arise from his own farm-buildings. Yet he stopped on the road and talked to our party, with perfect apparent equanimity, about the progress of the war and the rate at which the bombardment had proceeded. Not a day passes that I do not come across one or more of the shopkeepers of Sonderborg, whom I used to know as a customer, and who have literally

been burnt out of their dwellings, and have had all their stock-in-trade destroyed. They have nothing to do, and idle about the neighbouring villages, ready to chat with anybody they can come across. They all express a strong desire to have the war finished, and assert that enough has been done for the nation's honour, but of their private losses they talk with outward unconcern. I believe that almost all the householders in Alsen are insured against fire; and, moreover, there is a general belief that they are likely to receive compensation from any Government which obtains possession of the island after the war is over.

Still, any pecuniary indemnification they could possibly hope to obtain cannot make up for the loss of their business and the destruction of their trade connection. As much as I can understand the matter, I believe the causes of this extreme apparent indifference to be partly a strange stolidity of temperament habitual to the Schleswig character, and still more a strong sense of personal dignity, which creates a more than English dislike to any exhibition of sentiment. The animals themselves in Alsen bear the noise of the

artillery with a wonderful composure. The storks, knowing that summer is at hand, have come back in flocks to the island, and are taking up their old quarters in the houses where they have been sheltered so long. The dogs about the farm-yard never bark, even at night, however loud may be the crash of the shells bursting in the town; our horses, which shy at any stone along the road, never exhibit the slightest alarm at the thunder of the cannon; and the sheep browse in the fields, near which shells are falling, without paying the slightest attention to the sound. I have seen but one animal which betrayed any consciousness of danger, and that was a stoat, which was carrying off to its hole in a ploughed field a dead rat nearly as large as itself. The cannonade was brisk at the time, and every time a shot was heard the stoat dropped its prey in guilty terror; then the moment the sound had died away it clutched up the rat again, and crossed another furrow in fear and trembling. The Mohammedan who was furtively drinking a glass of spirits when the thunder-storm came on threw the contents of the glass upon the ground, saying—so the story goes—“Allah, Allah! what a deal of noise about a little

drop of brandy!" But the stoat, though he evidently entertained a similar belief that all this discharge of thunderbolts was intended to deprive him of his spoil, stuck firmly to his booty, and finally carried it off in triumph, in defiance of the angry gods. It is not perhaps in accordance with the dignity of history that I should tell you this incident, which I observed the other day; but I am weary of hearing guns, and of writing about parallels and bastions and angles of elevation. It is pleasant to get away into the woods and watch the symptoms of returning summer, and see how nature is constantly restoring the resources which men are destroying. Yet, even if you could get away from the sound of cannon, the mere love of natural beauty brings the observer back, strange to say, to the contemplation of the war. Anything lovelier than the view from the hill at the back of Sonderborg, on one of those bright spring evenings, when the sun is setting behind Dybbol in a cloudless sky, I have never seen out of Italy. The air is so clear, that you can count every house upon the hills opposite, and the cliffs of Broagerland look so near at hand, that you fancy you could throw a stone across the bay. The

smoke from the burning cottages is tinged with red by the rays of the setting sun, and over the eastern slopes of Dybbol Hill, deep sunk in shadow, the white puffs of smoke keep springing up in spiral pillars, as shell after shell comes crashing down, far and near, in quick succession. As the sunlight fades away, and the darkness comes on, the stillness of the air grows almost oppressive ; the red flashes of light become clearer and clearer as the shot darts from the cannon's mouth, and the fiery trail of the rockets may be watched through the air as they fly down upon the Danish batteries. The spectacle is a grand one, but then it is impossible to lay aside the thought of the men who are lying killed or wounded on that bare hill-side, standing forth so clearly against the dark, starlit sky.

April 17.

A sort of reprieve has been given to the Danes. Yesterday a messenger came in with a flag of truce from the Prussian lines. The exact tenour of his message has been kept carefully secret. All that has oozed out at present is, that he was the bearer of a summons from General von Wrangel

for a surrender of the position within eight-and-forty hours. Of course there is a host of rumours current about the terms under which the surrender is proposed ; but the only thing as yet certain about it appears to be that the Prussian Commander-in-Chief considers the game in his own hands, and that, unless his proposal is acceded to, to-morrow will not pass over without some attempt to drive the Danes yet further out of the intrenchments they have held so long and so gallantly. The officer who brought over the message said that all the enemy had done hitherto was mere child's play compared with what he was now in a position to do. All this may be mere gasconade, like Prince Frederick Charles's proclamation after the skirmish of Missunde ; and the object of that peremptory summons to surrender may be to intimidate the Danes, and to strengthen that section of the army which considers enough has been done for the honour of Denmark, and that further resistance is futile. Personally, I am inclined to fear that the proposal is made only too seriously. It is all important for the prestige of Prussia that Dybbol, if not Alsen, should be in her hands before the assemblage of the Conference on Wednesday

next ; and the progress made by the enemy within the last fortnight is sufficient to convince him that if the attack is to be made at all, it should be made speedily. The message, whatever it may have been, was communicated at once to Copenhagen ; but nobody anticipates an acceptance of the terms offered, and there is little question but that the Danish Government will adhere to its policy of resistance. It would be difficult for any ministry to surrender the last stronghold of Denmark in Schleswig on the very eve of a conference, which it is hoped will lead to an armistice within an early date. It is a bold game that King Christian and his ministers are playing, as the capture of Alsen by storm would involve not only an immense sacrifice of life, but the loss of all the artillery of Dybbol and the probable destruction of the Danish army. However, the boldest courses of action are sometimes the wisest, and I trust they may prove so in the present instance.

Meanwhile, since the arrival of the "Parlementaire," the Prussian fire has been much slackened. The forts, indeed, have been rained upon day and night with shells as usual, but the hillside and the town have been spared. Indeed,

there has been something ominous in the silence that has reigned for a considerable portion of the day. Another farm-house burnt down on the Alsen bank of the Sund is almost the only incident that has occurred upon our right. On the left, I am afraid that the twenty-four hours have not been so barren of result. Sixty Danish soldiers were surprised and taken prisoners at the outposts. The officer in command of the detachment and his servant made good their escape; and it is thought that if there had been equal zeal on the part of the soldiers they might also have effected a retreat. The Prussians are now so close at hand to the left of the Dybbol line of forts that the outposts have been drawn in behind the intrenchments. I have not been able to discover the losses of the besieged during the last two days, but I fear from the tone of conversation amongst the officers, who are acquainted with the facts, that they have not been below the average. Under these circumstances it is difficult to take a sanguine view of the Danish prospects; and if I, who have no personal interest in the matter, can hardly escape the depressing influence of the prospect of affairs, it is natural that the soldiers,

whose lives are at stake, should feel cheerless enough. I am obliged to dwell upon this point, because I feel that it must be understood thoroughly for anybody to appreciate the magnitude of the efforts the Danes are making. If ever men deserved the success they are unable to command, it is these Danish soldiers. To say that no reluctance has been shown to advance to the front, or that the ardour of the first days still remains amongst the troops, would be an idle perversion of the truth; but this much I can truly state, that the army, so far, has endured a trial of unparalleled severity with a courage and patience to which there have been but few and rare exceptions.

However, it is little use speculating on what the morrow may bring forth. In the present instance it may be truly said that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. We have had one bright sunny day at any rate. The wind is fearfully cold and cutting; but in sheltered spots, out of the wind's way, the air was so hot that an overcoat was almost unbearable. I took advantage of the lull in the bombardment to wander through the upper part of the town. Very pro-

bably it may be my last walk in that portion of Sonderborg. Yesterday, before the flag of truce came in, a shell was thrown from the batteries on the Schleswig side of the Sund, which struck a mill in a line with the windmills at the top of the town. So, if the attack begins to-morrow in earnest, probably the whole northern part of the town will be reduced to the same state as the lower part. From the Broager batteries, I believe this portion of Sonderborg cannot be reached with much effect, but it lies fearfully exposed to a cross-fire from the Sund. The town itself was even emptier than on former days. I went into the great inn of the place, which has still been untouched by shells, and found the house in charge of one servant-girl, who has stopped there all along with really remarkable courage: the cellar was exhausted, with the exception of a few barrels of beer; the rooms were all shut up, and the only inmates were half-a-dozen soldiers, loitering about the tap-room, and paying court to the barmaid, whose love of admiration exceeds her fear of cannon-balls. The street was deserted, and below Reymuth's Hotel I could not see a single person moving about. The

only sign of life in the place was—if the bull may be excused—the manufacture of coffins. The military undertakers have been driven out of the open space before the castle, and now carry on their trade in a sort of sand-pit, close to the high road, at the brow of Sonderborg Hill. There a lot of army carpenters were hammering away busily at the great deal coffins ; while others were painting them a dull deep-black colour. The demand has evidently exceeded the supply ; and the stock in hand was very low. Though it was Sunday, the work went on unabated ; and if the attack should come to-morrow, I am afraid there will be many a poor Dane who will have to content himself with a much more rough-and-ready receptacle for his bones than these elaborate and cumbrous boxes, whose contemplation, the authorities here appear to think, will be such an encouragement to the troops on their way to action, that the coffin-building establishment must be in the most conspicuous position possible.

THE FALL OF DYBBOL.

On board the "Haderslev," Hörup-Hav.

Near Sonderborg, April 18.

The end is come; and with it, amidst great sadness, it has brought this much of consolation, that I can at last speak freely. I have known for the last ten days that the army was becoming rapidly demoralised by the fearful trial to which it was exposed; that day after day the losses were at the rate of from one to two hundred per diem; that the troops were more and more unwilling to go to the front; that on more than one occasion regiments had refused to cross the bridges, and had only been induced to obey orders by the promise that they should speedily be led into action; that desertion had become common; that the forts most exposed to the fire had been completely silenced, and their guns dismantled and destroyed; and that, in the opinion of nine officers out of ten, the position was utterly untenable.

The necessity for concealment no longer exists. No reticence and no outspokenness can alter accomplished facts, and therefore I am now enabled to assert that the order sent from Copenhagen to

hold Dybbol *à l'outrance* was bitterly unwelcome to the army of Alsen. I stated in a letter written three weeks ago, while summing up the character of the struggle, that the Danes, in my opinion, would fight on gallantly for Dybbol as long as there was left a shadow of hope, but that they would not fight on with the recklessness of despair when all hope was gone. The event has exactly corresponded to my anticipations. Yesterday passed gloomily enough. The end was felt to be close at hand; and nobody who knew the facts of the case could doubt what that end would be. But yet towards evening, as the fire died away, there was a kind of reaction, so at least it seemed to me, in the feeling of the men I lived amongst. Another day had passed after all, and the meeting of the Conference was drawing very near. There was a rumour that the Prussian ammunition was exhausted, and time itself seemed to be fighting on the side of Denmark. The wind had gone down; the air was warm and still; and the moonlight night was so peaceful, it was impossible to believe that the final struggle was to come on the morrow. However, a rumour arrived at our quarters before I went to bed that the Danish

army was to be withdrawn during the night, and in consequence I slept in my clothes, having given orders to be called if anything unusual occurred. In the morning I got up somewhat earlier than usual, had breakfast with the family of the house where my abode has been fixed for the last fortnight, congratulated them on the night having passed so quietly, and then rode out to look for letters. The fire, though extremely brisk, was directed entirely against the forts of Dybbol Hill ; and the universal belief was that the Prussians would shell the hill-side, the bridge, and the fortifications for several hours, and then possibly attempt a storm when the Danes were worn out ; so I rode leisurely about my business, sauntering along through the pleasant lanes and wood-paths of this Alsen island.

Riding homewards, towards head-quarters, I met orderly after orderly galloping hastily along. Something was evidently stirring, and the whole face of Dybbol Hill, and the banks of the Sund, were now covered with smoke. I set off galloping towards the coast ; but I had not gone many steps before I met a Danish gentleman, resident at the same house as myself, who told me that the Prus-

sians had already captured Forts No. 4 and 5, and that "all was lost." There was no time to be wasted. The "Laader-Gaarde" farm, where I was stationed, was a position sheltered enough from any fire, either from Broager or from any of the batteries on the further side of Dybbol, but utterly exposed in case the enemy was once in possession of the crest of the hill. The moment I reached a position from which I could see the hill-side, it was clear that the battle was lost; the centre batteries had already been turned against the town, and the shells followed each other so rapidly, that their sound was like that of a steam-hammer striking constantly. The Laader-Gaarde itself was surrounded by spiral columns of smoke rising into the air, and then dying away into the clear blue sky, as shell after shell struck the ground in its neighbourhood. The "Rolf Krake," which was moored almost opposite our dwelling, was being fired at fiercely by the enemy's batteries. Great waterspouts sprang up on every side of her, as the shot fell in showers about her; and every now and then there was a fearful crash heard above the roar of the cannon and the constant crack of musketry, and we could tell that a shot

had hit her iron sides. It was no pleasant work making my way back home. To ride was simple folly, so I led my horse across the fields, taking such little shelter as the roadside hedges could afford me; and, watching anxiously the direction of every shell—a practice in which experience soon makes one perfect—I got at last up to the great farmyard. At the gate I met the servant who attends to our horses on the look-out, to tell us that we must be off without a moment's delay. I had always looked upon this groom as the idlest and most arrant humbug in the whole island of Alsen; but on this occasion, to do him justice, he showed a coolness for which I had not given him credit. He proposed to go and fetch our luggage from the farm, while we waited outside at a safe distance. This, however, I would not consent to. No one is less partial to putting his head in the way of a shell than I am myself; but still I could not reconcile it to my conscience to allow a man to go into danger for the sake of fetching my luggage, which I was not willing to undergo myself. So I sent the man off with the horses, and then made a bolt for the house. I suppose, while shells are falling round you, the open air is de-

cidedly safer than the interior of a dwelling ; but it is impossible to resist the impression that it is an advantage to have a roof over you under the circumstances. Inside the house everything was in confusion. The officers whom I had left sleeping at breakfast-time were all away in the battle, prisoners, or wounded, or killed, for anything we could tell ; the few wounded soldiers who were stationed at the farmyard had been ordered out ; and the only people left were the family and servants of the farm. The rooms were being rapidly dismantled ; but yet I found that my belongings had not been forgotten. With that marvellous kindness of the Danish nature, the first thought of our landlord, amidst all the terror and confusion of the unexpected bombardment, had been to place in safety the property of his foreign guests. A cart was standing before the door, and the luggage was already being brought out of my room. It was but a couple of minutes I spent in packing ; I had been prepared for such an event long ago, and it needed but a moment to close my bags and throw them upon the cart. Then there was a hasty leave-taking with my kind host, one warm grasp of the hand, and a hasty dash across

the farmyard, till I reached the shelter of a hedge, which followed the direction I was about to take; and now I was practically out of danger. As soon as I had reached the outskirts of the wood which stretches along the shores of Alsen, between Sønderborg and Hörup-Hav, I fastened up my horse and made for a point whence I could command a view of the scene of action. It must then have been about the fiercest moment of the short and disastrous conflict. From four to ten the enemy had shelled the batteries and the whole face of the hill with pitiless accuracy; the outposts had been drawn in; not a sentry even stood between the redoubts on the left wing and the advance posts of the Prussians, scarcely a stone's throw away. Suddenly the Danish soldiers, crouching as best they could under their battered trenches, heard a shout. With one rush the Prussians swarmed into the batteries; and, in ten minutes from the time the alarm was given, the Prussian flag was planted on the bastions of Dybbøl. Forts No. 1 and No. 2, which defended the extreme left, had almost ceased to exist five days ago; indeed, twelve out of the sixteen guns of the latter battery had been dismounted, and

not replaced. These redoubts were, I believe, deserted when the Prussians occupied them: the weak garrisons of Nos. 4 and 5 were taken by surprise, and overpowered by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. Thus the whole of the left wing of the position was carried by storm, and the Prussians pushed on at once to the forts on the right, carrying all before them. The second line of intrenchments, which the Danes have been throwing up during the last fortnight, were also occupied at once. By this time, however, the Danes had rallied from the surprise, and made one last effort to recover their lost ground. They charged the Prussians with the bayonet, and drove them back with shouts from the inner line. Their triumph, however, was short-lived. The columns of the enemy came pouring over the hill-side, bearing down all before them by their dead weight of numbers, and then it was felt that all was over, and the order was given to retreat.

It must have been about this period that I took my post of observation on a ridge commanding a full view of Dybbol Hill. The facts that I have mentioned were not known to me then. All I

could tell was that things were going badly for the besieged. The brow of the hill was lined with dark masses of troops too close and too serried to belong to the Danes. With my field-glass I could see the Prussian flag waving gaily from the heights; and it was clear, from the crowds of soldiers standing on the bastions of Fort No. 4, that there, at least, the fighting had ceased. Along the broad, bare, shelterless roads, leading from the brow of the hill to the bridges, dark lines of infantry were retreating hastily, and their columns were raked constantly by shells thrown from the field batteries, which the Prussians were bringing up with all speed to the line of Dybbøl. It looked to me, standing there, as if their own guns had been turned against the Danes, but this I believe was not the case, as very few of those guns were left in a state to fire at all, and those few were spiked before the Prussians could enter. Meanwhile, the scene itself, apart from the interest of the struggle, had about it a strange beauty. On the face of Dybbøl Hill, looking eastwards, the morning sun shone brightly. To the right, along the Sund, vast columns of smoke rose straight into the air from the burning cottages of Ulkebøl

Westermarck. On the left the cliffs of the Wemming Bund shores were enveloped in the haze caused by the ceaseless puffs of snow-white smoke which were belched forth by the Broager batteries. From the crest of the hill a belt of flame flashed constantly ; and the clear blue sky overhead and the still blue sea underneath encircled the whole of this picture of fire and flame and smoke in a gorgeous setting. The noise was fearful, greater even than I ever yet have heard it. As the Danes retreated down the hill, the Prussians turned the whole force of their fire full upon the bridges and the streets through which the retiring troops would have to pass. The Danish batteries on the Sonderborg shore opened fire to cover the retreat, and with some effect. The immediate result, however, was to bring down upon them the fire of Broager with fearful accuracy. The windmill battery, which stood on the left of the town—about a quarter of a mile from the farmhouse I had just quitted—was silenced in a few minutes. One shell came crashing through the thatched windmill, and in a moment it was in flames ; the fire spread to the houses between it and the town, and a vast cloud

of smoke rose up, obscuring the view of the hill behind it. Every now and then the whistling of the shells through the air ceased suddenly, the cannon were silent, and I could hear the sharp ring of musketry and the hoarse shouts of the combatants ; after which the cannon burst forth again, drowning all in an avalanche of sound. But with each pause the fire of the musketry grew fainter, and the shouts more distant. The "Rolf Krake" had steered slowly away, beaten off, and severely injured by the fire from Broager. It was clear that the day was lost ; the one question was how much was gone ; and there was no possibility of discerning this by merely gazing upon the smoke-covered hill-side.

So I mounted my horse again and worked round through the woods to the back of Sonderborg. Except that a great battle had been fought and lost, nobody whom I met knew anything. All the symptoms of an approaching rout were clearly visible ; detachments of troops were marching gloomily from distant country-quarters, in obedience to the alarm that had been sounded, but without knowing what point they were to make for. The roadside fields were full of scattered

groups of soldiers, haggard, powder-stained, and dust-covered, wandering about without their arms, or gazing anxiously from any eminence which afforded a glimpse of the distant heights of Dybbol. The roads were already choked up with long lines of carts, bearing the wounded anywhere, so it was away from the field of battle. I went on to the head-quarters and found them utterly deserted, except by a score of orderlies waiting for the orders that never came. I passed on to the Parsonage, of which I have so often written, where the Commander-in-chief resided. General Gerlach had been confined to the house for some days, owing to a severe accident, and I thought that there, possibly, some intelligence might be learnt; but the place was deserted by everybody except the pastor and his servants. The general had gone out early, and no tidings whatever had been received, except a vague rumour that things were going ill. From the high-road hard by I could see large bodies of troops retreating hastily from Sonderborg. It seemed as if no time could be wasted. If the Prussians succeeded in crossing the bridges with the Danes, and thus entering the town, our retreat was liable to be cut off at once.

So, in company with the brother correspondent whose fortunes I have shared hitherto, I resolved to make the best haste I could to Hörup-Hav, and there, at any rate, secure a shelter for the night. It was hard work urging on our tired horses, but there was no time to think of mercy to beasts. For some way our progress was stopped by the increasing press of waggons crowding towards the harbour. At last, however, we got ahead of the train, and galloped on as fast as the rough cross-country roads would allow. When we reached Hörup, the soldier who had charge of our horses was not forthcoming, and it was impossible to find a place where we could even tie them up. So, trusting to past experience, I rode on another long weary mile to the house of the pastor of the village, with whom I was previously unacquainted, feeling sure that I should not ask a favour in vain. I was not disappointed in my expectation, and, after having got stabling for the horses, and being welcomed with that frank, kindly hospitality which is so natural to the Danes, that, even on a day of national disaster and personal peril, their first thought is how to make a stranger comfortable, I walked back to the harbour of Hörup.

The water-side, the roads far and near, and the wooden piers which have been hastily knocked up for the retreat, were already crowded with wounded soldiers. An immense steamer was moored along the pier, waiting to receive them. Even the most fearful of spectacles loses its effect after a time; and I have seen so many wounded for the last few weeks, that I have become somewhat callous to the sight of suffering which a mere spectator has no power whatever to relieve. But still the scene was terrible. As the carts jolted down to the wharf, soldier after soldier was borne out on stretchers and placed on the deck of the ship. The men were well wrapped and covered up, and their wounds seemed to have been all attended to carefully. Bad, however, is the best at times like these. Some of the men lay so quiet, that you could scarcely tell whether they lived or not; others tossed from side to side constantly in the restlessness of pain; and others literally writhed with agony as the carts swayed to and fro. In more than one case, which I observed in the course of a few minutes, the occupant of the cart was found dead when the bearers came to remove him, and his body, instead of being taken on board ship,

was replaced in the straw and covered over with a soldier's coat. In this one vessel 600 wounded men were carried off, and seven other steam-packets were lying in the port waiting to receive their dismal freight.

My business, however, was not with the dead or dying. Officers whom I knew had come down to the pier, and from them I learnt that the whole of Dybbol was lost; but that the bridges had been blown up in time, and the advance of the enemy arrested. Forthwith I set out again on my travels, and trudged over the four long miles which lie between Hörup Pier and the Laader-Gaarde. There I felt pretty sure I should learn something. At any rate, I should hear the fate of the family, for whom I was deeply alarmed, as a rumour had come in that the farm had been burnt down an hour after I left it. Happily, the story proved not to be true; I found the house standing still intact; the children had been got away, but the farmer himself was there with his wife, alone in their dismantled house. I tried my utmost to persuade them to leave, as any moment the Prussians might shell the place from Dybbol; but to no purpose. Our host said that as long as he

lived he would stop by his farm-buildings; and his wife said that where her husband stopped there she should stop also. There was nothing to be done, and so I parted company with my kind, simple hosts—God knows, unwillingly enough. The town of Sonderborg was in flames, and the bombardment was continued without ceasing. The smoke, however, concealed the view of the hill-side. Thence I went to a neighbouring dwelling, whither a few of the officers who had lived with us at the Laader-Gaarde had, as I heard, gone for shelter. There I found a friend—a captain of artillery—and learnt with extreme pleasure that the whole of our late companions had escaped so far unhurt. He himself had no orders what to do, and it was clear that as yet no plan had been formed either to defend or evacuate the island. Major Rosen—an officer from whom, in my character of a correspondent, I have received constant civility, and who was the chief of General Gerlach's staff, and, it was whispered, the real commander of the army—had been wounded and taken prisoner; and no orders had yet been communicated, even to the troops. Under these circumstances I resolved to return

to Hörup harbour and spend the night there, leaving my further course to be guided by the news of the morrow. I was fortunate enough to secure a sofa in the little Asséns steamer, with whose captain I had a speaking acquaintance. An hour's row about the port in search of the vessel, lying *perdu* amidst the host of shipping, has at last brought me to my destination; and here, after fourteen hours spent almost without pause, either walking or riding, I am writing as best I can by one flickering candle.

It is too early to attempt to estimate fully the import of this disastrous defeat. The loss must have been fearful. My suspicion is, that of the Danish troops who were on the hill-side of Dybbol not half made good their retreat. The bridges were blown up early in the day, and the Prussians were too close upon the Danes to render it probable that any great portion of the retreating army could have got across before their pursuers. The *tête-de-pont* on the Schleswig side held out valiantly, and delayed the advance of the enemy till there was time to destroy the bridges. The soldiers who manned this post were brought over in boats, after spiking their guns. Three thou-

sand captured, killed, or wounded, is the lowest estimate I have just heard of the Danish loss. Three regiments are said to be completely cut up. Of the 18th battalion not a single officer has returned. General Duplat, the commander of the first division, is amongst the killed. The Prussian loss I suspect to be comparatively small. The Danes had not time to fire their cannon into the advancing enemy; and I believe two companies of field artillery alone took part in the action on the Danish side. The Danes fought gallantly, but the battle was lost from the first; and the only aim was to make good a retreat which should have been made a week ago. The main question is now, Can the Prussians cross to Alsen?

HÖRUP-HAV, April 19.

I have not much to add to my letter of last night. As the details of yesterday's battle become more fully known, the general result of the conflict is even more disastrous than I was at first led to suppose. General Duplat, six colonels, and forty officers in all are dead. The number of killed, wounded, and missing is now estimated at

from 3,000 to 4,000 ; and the whole of the cannon on the Dybbol heights has fallen into the possession of the enemy. To-day some 400 or 500 missing soldiers have come in from different parts of the island, but the muster-roll of the lost and absent is still a fearfully heavy one. It would, I think, be of little interest to you for me to repeat the names of the officers who have fallen. To me, who have now lived in this camp for months, and to whom most of the leading ones here were known, either personally or by sight at least, the dead list has a very painful attraction. One incident, however, let me mention, as that of a brave soldier's death. When General Duplat was struck down on the slopes of Dybbol Hill his soldiers wanted to carry him away. "Leave me alone," said the General, "it is all over for me, and you have other work to do." "Bravely done!" he shouted again, as a young officer pressed forward in obedience to his orders, and with these words on his lips he died. Major Rosen fell by the side of the General, mortally wounded, and to-day his dead body was brought back into the Danish lines. This gentleman, the real head of the army at Alsen, was a Holsteiner bred and born, whose

family have adhered throughout to the side of Denmark. Two days before his death, his brother's farm at Ravnhavn was burnt down and destroyed by the Prussian shells from Røgebøl. Another young officer I was slightly acquainted with, who is now amongst the dead, had married but two months ago, and had to leave his wife—a girl of nineteen—three days after their marriage, to join the war. So I might record instances by the score of sad private histories, whose fatal issue is wrapped up with that of this great national disaster; but the figures, I think, speak for themselves more powerfully than any statement of mine could do. Four thousand killed, wounded, and missing!—what words can add force to this simple fact?

It seems that the Danes were completely taken by surprise. Somehow or other, they had made up their minds that the Prussians would not attack before the evening, and at the moment of the assault the men stationed within the forts were sleeping or eating, thinking that a few hours' rest lay before them. The forts on the right were evacuated as soon as it was clear that those on the left and centre were in the hands of the enemy.

The retreat of the Danes from the right was effected with extreme order and regularity, and the troops passed the bridges without the least tumult. The Danish loss was almost entirely upon the left ; the artillery officers in the redoubts were taken without exception. So complete was the surprise, that the intelligence of the attack was not received at head-quarters at Ulkeböl till the position was in the hands of the Prussians. The Guards, who had been relied upon to check the advance of the enemy in the last resort, did not reach the bridge until too late to take part in the action, and their loss was extremely slight, comparatively, only eight men being killed. At the *tête-du-pont*, which was defended with great gallantry, the chief fighting took place. I am informed by Danish officers that the Prussians fought splendidly in their repeated assaults upon this last intrenchment.

To-day has passed gloomily and quietly. At two o'clock the Prussians offered an armistice, in order to bring over the bodies of the Danish officers who had fallen in the battle. The offer was accepted at once, and thirty bodies were brought across in boats. I regret to say that the corpses of these gallant men had been rifled of their

buttons, their shoulder-straps, and even of their boots; the insides of their pockets were turned out, and the rings—so I am told—were taken off their fingers. Of course, such things will happen on all hard-fought battle-fields; but to the Danes, who have an extreme personal respect for the bodies of the dead, the incident was very painful. After the armistice was over, the Prussians recommenced shelling the northern side of the town, but only slackly. Their advance on the island is expected to-morrow.

The head-quarters are moved to-night to Hörup, close to the port.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

HÖRUP-HAV, April 20.

My letter bears the date of Hörup-Hav, where my residence is fixed—if a man can be correctly said to reside in a place where he shifts from boat to boat at night, and has no roof to shelter him throughout the day. But at this moment I am writing from the hospitable farm-house where I lived till the capture of Dybbol. I little thought when I left it last Monday that I should ever see

its inside again ; still less that I should write there in perfect peace and quiet. Such, however, is the case. I should hardly know the place, it is so changed from its normal state during the time I had my abode here. The Dannebrog flag is taken down from the doorway ; the soldiers quartered here, who filled every nook and corner of the house, are scattered miles away over the island ; the officers, who formed our society, have taken up their quarters further inland ; the family and children are gone ; the house is dismantled of its furniture ; and nobody is left except a few farm-servants. The place is so wonderfully quiet, that it has a charm for me at this moment which you must have lived for weeks amidst din, and noise, and bustle, the clashing of swords and the roar of cannon, to understand thoroughly. Passing by the place on my way home from Sonderborg, I turned in to see how my kind host was faring ; and, finding the room empty, I am writing in the apartment which used to be the head-quarters of the officers.

I have this moment returned from wandering over the town—a visit which I had not expected to pay, if at all, for many a day to come. Since

daybreak not a shot has been fired on either side. No formal armistice has been concluded ; but it is clear that the Prussians are not for the hour disposed to commence the attack, and until they do, the Danes will certainly not hurry on an assault by random firing. Thus for the present we have perfect peace. Any moment it may end, and the shells may be hurled against the ruins of the town and the remnant of the Danish garrison ; but meanwhile there is time to breathe, and for that we have cause to be thankful. As soon as I learnt that the fire was suspended, I made my way from Hörup-Hav to the outskirts of Sonderborg, where I fastened up my horse and set out for the town on foot. In all enterprises of this kind, it seems to me there is no harm in discretion. If the Prussians should recommence firing, as is quite possible, without notice, my luck would be very bad indeed if I could not creep under shelter of walls and hedges to some place of safety ; but to be on horseback in the middle of a narrow street, where shells are falling about you, is by no means a position that I covet. Moreover, on a morning like this, it is a pleasure to wander alone on foot through the quiet country fields. The day is one

of exquisite warmth and beauty. Not a cloud is to be seen in the sky ; not a puff of smoke rises from the cliffs of Wemming Bund or the heights of Dybbol ; the houses and cottages which were set on fire have burned themselves out ; the air is so still, that the windmills with which the country is studded stand with their sails motionless ; not a musket-shot is to be heard ; the one sound which breaks the perfect stillness of the day is the singing of the birds, who have come out in force to greet the advent of summer.

So, on this lovely spring morning, I strolled across the fields to the town of Sonderborg. I worked my way behind the hedgerows, now covered with the first tinge of green, for fear that some Prussian rifleman might think it advisable to try the accuracy of his needle-gun upon my person. Even the fields near the town were deserted, and the labourers have been driven away by the dread of the bombardment. Only on what we should call the parish-ground of Sonderborg, where the poor have each a plot of their own, a couple of peasants were still digging away on their small patches of land. Shells are bad enough ; but to the poor want is even a worse danger than death.

I passed over a common where there used to be barracks; the sheds were burnt down, and the land was literally furrowed with shells. In a space of some twenty feet square I counted as many holes, surrounded by mounds of earth, which the balls had thrown about them as they buried themselves in the soil. I walked on through the orchard gardens which stand on the southern side of Sonderborg. They too were deserted. The little cottages which face the fields, where the poorer part of the inhabitants lived, were now at last empty of their owners, who had stuck to them with a mussel-like tenacity. They were so slightly built, that wherever a shell had struck the whole building had come tumbling down; but fortunately their roofs were very low, and most of the bombs directed against this part of the town had flown over the roofs into the open country. Through the lonely gardens, bearing already that indescribable air of neglect which creeps so soon over places where man's care has been daily given, I walked on to the house of the burgomaster, which had been my home till the town was bombarded. Most persons in their lives must have felt the pang occasioned by the sight of a dwelling where you

have lived and had friends and been kindly welcomed, whose doors are now closed to you, and whose rooms are occupied by strangers. But here the house had not changed its owners, but stood tenantless. I climbed over the garden wall; not a soul was to be seen; every window was broken; the little room in which I had slept was still intact; but there were great chasms in the roof, and in the wall there was a hole so large that I could have crept through it easily. Whatever may happen, the house will have to be rebuilt before it can be again inhabited; and, amidst the changes which this war must bring about, it is little likely that the present officials of Alsen will be retained in their places. So I bade a last farewell to the house, standing so prettily on the island shores, where I had spent so many happy days and had received so much kindness. I looked into the bare, deserted rooms, plucked a few of the primroses and crocuses which had sprung up in the little garden, and then moved onwards up the winding streets I had traversed so often. I stood for a few minutes on the open space commanding a view of the Sund. Dybbol Hill lay before me, but little altered in look from what I had known

it hitherto. The soldiers wandering about the roads and encamped upon the fields were Prussians instead of Danes, that was all. With my field glass I could see that the uniforms were different, but to the naked eye one body of troops appeared very like another. The number, indeed, was strangely magnified, and the whole army of Alsen if collected at one moment on Dybbol Hill would have seemed small compared with the masses who were already quartered on the bare slopes so gallantly defended, so easily lost. Yesterday Prince Frederick Charles and all his staff came down to the *tête-du-pont* by the Sund to inspect their newly-acquired territory; but to-day, as no armistice was declared, the lower parts of the hill were apparently not visited by curious observers. Large bodies of troops were employed upon the redoubts, engaged, I suspect, in removing the cannon; but otherwise there was no sign of activity. The Prussian sentries were pacing up and down, close to the water's edge; the trenches were crowded with riflemen; the cannon visible on the slopes were turned towards, not away from, Sonderborg; and the bridges were broken by a long gap between the ends still jutting out from

either shore. Between myself and the castle not a human being was to be seen. The Danish soldiers stationed by the banks of the Sund were partly under cover of the Schloss, partly behind trenches which have been hastily raised up close to the shore. The care with which the men kept their heads under shelter of the earthworks showed that there was still danger of hearing a rifle-shot whizz past you ; so I turned backwards to the town. It is strange, I may mention here, that the castle itself has received but little injury. The shells have struck its immense stone walls time after time without penetrating them ; the roof has been destroyed ; but the grim prison-like Schloss—about whose date there is no tradition left, so old is it—has survived all the younger buildings of the city. What is more odd, too, is that the wooden barrack sheds, which the Danes ran up just before the bombardment began, though roofed over with thatch, remain unhurt. An English officer, who visited the works some weeks ago, remarked to me on the folly of placing such sheds in their present position, where the first shell would set them on fire. Every building, however, on the hill-side has been burnt, but the

barracks have escaped—were not even set fire to by the Danes on their retreat, and are now occupied by the Prussians. “*Sic vos, non vobis*” should surely be the motto inscribed upon their entrance.

Then I moved onwards, through narrow winding alleys, into the main thoroughfare, which was so completely *the* street of Sonderborg that, alone amidst its compeers, it has no name whatever. A scene of such utter desolation I could scarcely have conceived. When I saw the town last, directly after the bombardment, there were plenty of people about the streets, and the volumes of smoke and flame which rose on every side gave it a sort of ghastly animation. But now all was quiet as the grave—silent as the tomb. I went through street after street, passed house after house, and met nobody. Every building was more or less injured, but the luck which attends all mortal things had bestowed very unequal measure upon the different dwellings. One house would be literally pounded down to the ground; another would be a mere mass of blackened ashes; while a third would remain intact, except for its shattered roofs and broken rafters. The

doors and windows had been burst open by the mere concussion of the noise. There was not one I could not have entered easily if I had liked. Small articles of household ornament, flower-pots filled with plants withered for want of water, pictures hanging crookedly from the walls, looking-glasses broken to a thousand pieces, might be seen through the open windows. There was not much, indeed, to steal, for most of the dwellings had been burnt to their bare walls by the fire; but what there was any one might have taken. Not a soul, however, was to be seen. On entering the main street, up which you can look for nearly a quarter of a mile, I could not see a person moving. The deathlike silence was absolutely oppressive; my own footsteps seemed to awaken all sorts of ghostly echoes from the gaunt, blackened walls; the mere crash of a shell would have been welcomed for the moment, to break the painful stillness. There is nothing grand about the ruins of a small town like this, with not a building in it, except the castle, of about a hundred years of age or more than two stories high. The remnants of these comfortable Danish burgher homes had no grandeur in their desolation. The one

thing impressive was the perfect unbroken solitude.

In my hour's wanderings over a town which numbered four thousand inhabitants but a fortnight ago, I met only six persons, all of whom appeared to me to be country farmers, attracted thither by curiosity like myself. The upper part of Sonderborg was now as empty as the lower. The day was overpoweringly hot; I was half parched with thirst; but even in the outskirts I could find but one house of any kind where water was to be obtained. As far as I could see not a single dwelling was inhabited, if I except half a dozen which lie on the other side of the hill. The camp by the windmills at the back of the town is itself deserted; and, except the soldiers on duty at the batteries, the pigeons on the house-tops, and a stray spectator, there may be said not to be a living thing in the whole of the dead city. The place must be altogether rebuilt, if ever it is to become again the chief town of Alsen: my own belief is, that Sonderborg will never recover its importance, but will remain for many years to come a mass of ruins. It was a relief to get back to the open fields. On the verge of the

town I met an old stork poking disconsolately about amidst the ruins of the adjoining houses. Its nest had probably been destroyed, and it stood there as a fit emblem of the desolation the war has brought upon this ill-fated city, sacrificed to the maintenance of Teutonic nationality.

I have just heard with great regret that Lieutenant Jaspersen, of the "Rolf Krake," was killed during the affair of Monday. He was a bright, cheerful lad, who had been much in England, and was one of my earliest acquaintances in Sonderborg. I have had many a warm shake of the hand from that frank, open, gallant sailor. Poor fellow, his death was instantaneous. A shell struck the "Rolf Krake" full upon her deck—wood, by the way, not iron—pierced right through, and exploded underneath, killing the lieutenant, wounding six men round him, and causing much injury to the vessel.

April 22.

The day after a battle, I suspect, is always dreary; how much more so are the days after a defeat! Very dull, at any rate, and weary have been the hours which have gone by since the cap-

ture of Dybbol. The Danes are drinking, as it were, the dregs of their disaster. It is not so much, I think, the actual personal grief for the loss sustained, the misfortune which has fallen upon Denmark, that depresses the minds of the soldiers and civilians still left on Alsen. I have been in many countries at great moments of a nation's destiny, both for evil and for good; and it has always struck me before, as it strikes me now, how small a portion public affairs, whatever may be their magnitude, occupy in the lives of individuals. After all, the personal interests of private people take up the chief part of their thoughts. As far as I could observe, London went on after much the same fashion on the day when we received the news of the battle of Inkermann, and on that when we heard of the massacre of Cawnpore. So it is here. Though Dybbol may be fallen, and Alsen may lie at the mercy of the Prussians, and the greatness of Denmark may seem to have passed away, yet meals must be cooked, and fields tilled, and newspapers printed, just as if a victory had been won. No sensible man would ever accuse the Danes of want of patriotism, because there is not mourning or

weeping in every house you enter. Many homes, indeed, have been made desolate by this battle; many families widowed of one dearly loved; and there the sorrow is not soon to be forgotten or speedily to pass away. But for those whose private fortunes have not made shipwreck in the general disaster, the first impression caused by the battle seems already to have died out. Men whose homes, or estates, or pursuits lie in the island of Alsen have many things to think of besides the welfare of Denmark. Ultimately their fortunes must be shared with those of Schleswig—not of Fünen or of Zealand. The longer I live in Alsen, the more I see that the nationality of its inhabitants is very composite. Already I fancy I can perceive a not unnatural tendency on the part of the residents in the island to describe themselves rather as Danish Schleswigers than as Danes. People seem to me to talk German a good deal more readily than they did some weeks ago; and complaints are made about the extent to which the welfare of the country is sacrificed to the obstinacy of Copenhagen, which I had not hitherto heard. I am told that Zealand has suffered nothing by the war; that, on the contrary,

the Copenhageners have been making money fast; that the Duke of Augustenburg has always been regretted in Alsen; that the lower class of Danish officials were not men whom the Schleswigers could respect—and so on. There is little importance in these vague grumbings by themselves; they serve only to show in which way the wind is setting. The defeated as well as the absent are always in the wrong, and the Alseners would not be human beings if they were not beginning to perceive that there is something to be said for the new proprietors. “I am a Dane myself,” a farmer here said to me the other day, “and wish, if possible, to belong to Denmark; but I fear there can be no permanent peace for Schleswig, if a separation does not take place.” And I suspect this feeling is now a common and a growing one in Alsen.

Even amongst the soldiers themselves, I think I can perceive that the prospect which this defeat gives of an early termination of the war is not without some shade of consolation. The peasant recruits cannot but be anxious to get back to their homes and families; they have suffered long privations and hardships; they have done enough for

the honour of Denmark ; and if at last they have been worsted in the conflict, they have fought against overwhelming odds and have held their own manfully. There is no unwillingness amongst them, now that the first hour of depression has passed away, to go on fighting, and if the order should come they will, I have no doubt, fight on gallantly, but there is no eagerness to continue the war ; and the announcement of an armistice would be received, to say the least, without any general dissatisfaction. Besides, the result of Monday's battle has come home to the army more than it has to the inhabitants of Alsen. There is not a soldier who has not friends, comrades, kinsmen, amongst those who fell upon the field, or are lying in the hospitals, or are in the hands of the enemy. A retreat, too, is always dispiriting, and virtually the Danish army is retreating from Alsen. The head-quarters will be removed to-day or to-morrow to Assens, in the island of Fünen ; every day troops are embarking ; the great bulk of the army is scattered over the island, in readiness to move ; and the harbour of Hörup is crowded with vessels, lying at anchor for the reception of the soldiers in case of need. There

is little at the moment for the troops to do; the Prussians have scarcely fired a gun since Monday, and have made no attempt as yet to pass the Sund; the long processions of soldiers and waggons which used to block up the roads leading to Sonderborg have almost disappeared; and most of the wounded have been removed from the island. In fact, it is difficult, when you wander about the neighbourhood of Sonderborg, as I have done for the last two days in every direction, to imagine that one army was still besieging, and another still defending, this Danish stronghold.

The truth is, that our present position is one which I suspect has few parallels in the history of warfare. I have been sometimes in a theatre where the audience were uncertain whether the play was at an end and the curtain about to drop, or whether there was still one more last scene to come. Everybody was getting up, some had already left the house, and nobody exactly knew if he ought to follow their example or sit down again till the drama was terminated. Now this is exactly the condition we all are in now. Is the curtain to drop on the capture of Dybbol, or is the

closing scene to be the entry of the Prussians into Alsen?

Yesterday the Germans sent in the body of General Duplat with a military escort. The officer in command said he was desired to express the hopes of the Prussian army that the dead soldier would be buried with the highest honours, and to state that two wreaths placed upon his bier had been laid thereon by the hands of Prince Frederick Charles and Field-Marshal Wrangel, in honour of a brave man's memory. This sort of sentimentalism is not very much to the taste of Englishmen, or, for that matter, of Danes, but the trait is worth mentioning as a well-meant act of courtesy. I have always endeavoured to do justice to both combatants, and never saw any advantage in exalting the merits of the Danes by representing their enemies as cowards or barbarians. The bombardment of Sonderborg is bad enough, without adding to the sins of those who perpetrated it offences of which they are not guilty. For this reason, I think it right to state that I can discover no adequate foundation for the charges of having outraged the persons of the dead, which have been brought against the

Prussians by the Danes. Yesterday I visited the church of Ulkeböl, where the bodies of the dead officers were laid, in order to ascertain for myself what truth there was in these rumours.

The scene was strangely impressive. Out of the hot air and the bright sunlight, I passed into the little church of Ulkeböl. Like all Danish churches, it is simple almost to bareness. One long, low nave, with whitewashed walls and wooden roof, constitutes the whole of the edifice; the floor is filled with high wooden pews, separated by a broad passage up the centre. At the east end is the wooden altar-screen with the crucifix above it, and the unlit candles standing on the communion table before it. A sentinel was placed at the door to keep away curious idlers; and as I entered I found myself alone with the dead. The sunlight struggled feebly in through the dust-stained windows, and the only sound to be heard was the chirping of the birds underneath the eaves. The dead did not lie all together: even in their last resting-place above the ground the rules of military precedence were still kept sacred. In the porch were placed the bodies of the non-commissioned officers; behind

the altar those of the captains and lieutenants ; and in the little vestry, apart from their fellows, were the colonels who had fallen. Very silently and slowly I picked my way amidst the corpses which lay around me. About their aspect there was little horrible ; none of them were much disfigured ; and on only two or three faces was the blood still left unwashed away. They were all clad in their uniforms, and laid upon their backs, with straw beneath their heads, as though something was still needed for them to rest upon without uneasiness. On their breasts were pinned pieces of paper, stating their name and rank. Many of the corpses had already been buried or sent away at the request of friends. But still there were some fifteen officers left, and about as many corporals and sergeants. The wounds were all in the face or breast, none, as far as I could see, in the back. They were all, too, apparently inflicted by rifle-balls, and not by shells—a fact to which I attribute the absence of any great disfigurement. Almost without exception, the expression of the faces was that of men in deep, heavy sleep, after hours of wakeful weariness. Very peaceful and calm they looked as they lay

there awaiting burial. The presence of death had already given a sort of refinement to the features, not common in Danish faces ; and the fixedness of the usual Danish expression was toned gently down amongst the dead. I saw men with whom I had chatted, and dined, and laughed but a few days ago. Many were young ; all were in the prime of life ; and had families and friends, and kinsmen. Yet, by a strange coincidence, the last person probably to gaze upon their features before they were lowered into the grave was a casual acquaintance, with whom they had passed a few hours in company. The time for the funeral was approaching, and I had scarcely left the church when I could hear the salvoes fired across the newly-made graves. I wonder to how many Danish wives and mothers that burial-ground of Ulkeböl will long be a place of pilgrimage ! Close to the church there is a farmhouse, which a Swedish lady has bought that she might be near the cemetery of Sonderborg, where lies the body of her husband, who fell in the campaign of 1848. If her example should be followed, there will soon be gathered round about Ulkeböl a sad colony of widowed wives and childless mothers.

However, I must state that the corpses which I saw bore no traces of any unusual desecration. In every case their boots had been taken off, and the rings removed from their fingers: in only one instance had any part of the dress except the boots been pulled off, and there were no cuts visible upon their hands. Of course, I cannot say positively there is no truth in the Danish story that the fingers of officers were cut off for the sake of their rings. I have not seen all the corpses brought back: all I can say is, that I saw no trace of it myself.

I am afraid there is no army in the world in which there is not more or less plundering of the dead after the battle is over. If there is, it is the Danish one; but even that I doubt. Personally the feeling on the subject has always seemed to me exaggerated. If a man shoots me dead, I do not feel that he increases the wrong done me by wearing my boots and rings. But I know that robbing the dead on the field of battle is considered a disgraceful act, according to military codes, and therefore it is fair to say that the Prussians, in my belief, are not worse in this respect than their neighbours.

On board the "Haderslev,"

Off Alsen, April 23.

I write this on board the steamer which is now carrying me away from Alsen. Whether it may be my lot to visit it again in the course of my journeyings, I cannot surmise. Day after day has passed since the fatal Monday—which now seems an age ago—and each night I have expected to be awoken by the alarm that the Prussians were coming. But still nothing has occurred to break the uniformity of our daily life. Copenhagen had become the centre of political action, and Fredericia seemed to be the place where future fighting, if it occurred at all, was likely to come to pass. Under these circumstances, either the capital or the stronghold of Jutland appeared to be more eligible quarters than the half-deserted island of Als. But still I was unwilling to leave the place where I had stayed so long till I had seen the matter out to the end. There was a chance that the Danes might make a last desperate struggle for Alsen; and so I lingered from day to day, meaning each night to go the next morning, if nothing had happened meanwhile, and still waiting on.

However, yesterday evening I heard that the

Prussians had sent the greater part of their army before Dybbol, and the whole of their siege artillery northwards in the direction of Fredericia. I learnt also that the Danes were transporting the remnant of their troops as fast as possible to Fünen; and that the head-quarters were to be removed this morning without fail to Assens, a little sea-port town on the western coast of Fünen. Moreover, I needed no information to assure me that the Danes had abandoned all idea of seriously contesting the passage of the Sund. I walked over the whole of Sonderborg yesterday, and satisfied myself that no preparations were making to defend the town. The utmost that can be expected from the troops still stationed on the banks of the Sund and on the neighbouring heights is that they should delay the advance of the enemy across the straits long enough to allow the bulk of the army to make good its retreat. Be the cause what it may, the Prussians have shown no sign of pushing on their success with vigour. The whole conduct of the war, as I have often had occasion to observe before, is to a looker-on inexplicable. There is no doubt that the Prussians might have crossed over to Alsen without difficulty on the day of the capture of

Dybbol. Their entrance on any one of the days immediately following would scarcely have been attended with greater difficulty ; and the inevitable result would have been the capture of what was left of the Danish army. Yet the Danes have been permitted to remove their troops in sight of the enemy without molestation, and no apprehension, as far as I could learn, was ever entertained by the Danish commanders about their retreat being cut off. At this moment it is asserted by officials, who ought to be well informed, that the Prussians have no intention of crossing the straits at present. It is said that, as long as the Germans remain upon the Schleswig side of the Sund, they oblige the Danes to maintain a force in Alsen, the loss of whose services can be ill afforded ; that if, on the other hand, the Prussians move on into Alsen itself, they will be forced themselves to keep a large army there, and will be exposed to the risk of constant assaults by naval expeditions disembarking troops upon the island. At Dybbol they are in perfect safety from any attack, and, as they can cross over the Sund whenever they think good, they are as much masters of Alsen as if they were quartered amidst the ruins of Sonderborg.

Whatever might be the justice of these calculations, it appeared probable that I might have to wait for days or weeks on the island, seeing nothing except the movements of a few Prussian troops, crowding in and out of the Dybbol forts, like ants burrowing in a sand-hill. Even if the Germans should make up their mind to a sudden advance on Alsen, there was no great probability of any further fighting, and there was a great likelihood that I might be taken prisoner without warning, and be detained till the Prussians had satisfied themselves of my nationality; so I resolved to follow the example of the commander-in-chief, and leave Alsen with what haste I could. It was late in the evening when I accomplished that most difficult task of making up my own mind, and there were many kind friends to be said farewell to before I left the island. If it is the advantage of a roving life that you make many friends, it is the disadvantage also that you have many partings. The community of sympathies, the close intimacy of a life whose days were necessarily spent together, and, above all, the participation in some measure in a common danger, had made many of the acquaintanceships

I had formed in the island very like friendships; and, as I parted company with those who had sheltered and befriended me so cordially, it was impossible not to feel that our paths in life were scarcely likely to cross again. There was little, too, cheering in the prospects of those to whom I bade farewell. National humiliation, the loss of their country, and the ruin of their private fortunes, were the lot to which most of them had to look forward. All I could do was to utter a heart-felt though unavailing hope that better times might be in store for this kindly, honest people, and with this hope we parted.

It was early morning when I was on foot again on my way to Hörup harbour. The cold dry east winds which had been blowing for weeks had at last disappeared, and the deep-blue skies had vanished with them. The heavens were covered over with dull black clouds. The trees were still bare of leaves, and the wind moaned fitfully through the great birch forests across which my road lay. It seemed a fitting day for the retreat from Alsen, and, in fact, the removal of the headquarters to the island of Fünen, on the other side of the Belt, was a confession that the battle was

over. Ten regiments, I was told officially, were to be left in Alsen ; but I knew that these skeleton regiments probably averaged little over five hundred men apiece, and that many of them were under early orders to leave. Even though there was no alarm, the scene at Hörup harbour was one of extreme confusion, and it was easy to judge what it would have been if the Prussian cavalry had been seen coming out of the forest glades which surround the one harbour of Alsen now that Sonderborg is lost. Carts jammed up the narrow roads and the slightly-built piers which had been hastily run out into the sea. Steamers, fishing-smacks, barges, and rafts were all dovetailed in together, in an inextricable puzzle. The landing was crowded with officers of the staff looking hopelessly after their horses and their luggage. The large Swedish steamboat which had the honour of carrying General Gerlach and his staff was to have sailed at nine ; but two hours elapsed before it could be got away from its moorings. A great number of scattered troops were collected about the quay, waiting for transport on the different sailing-vessels, but there was no cheering as the General embarked, followed by his staff. Little

was said by anybody, except a few hasty farewells, and not a shout was raised. Indeed, ever since the defeat of Monday, the Danish troops have been wonderfully silent, and I have never once heard the "Tappre Landsoldat," whose strains used to be so familiar. There is no heart, indeed, for singing now. Very shortly the steamer got under weigh, and moved out to sea, the officers crowding her paddle-boxes to get one last sight of Alsen. As the ship came out of the port, in sight of Dybbol and Broager, the "Dannebrog" was raised to the fore, and the military band struck up an air, which, I suppose, was patriotic, but which sounded strangely mournful. I question whether the ship was within reach of the Prussian batteries; at any rate, they vouchsafed no notice, and the staff of the late army of Alsen made good their retreat, with no need for undignified haste. They had stopped for five full days after it was clear that Alsen was untenable; and to stay longer would have been simple folly. But, inevitable as it was, the mere act of retreat was still a painful one.

The packet by which I sail started immediately after the war steamer, which we have already left far behind: the low bare heights of Dybbol and

the wood-crowned slopes of Alsen are no longer visible ; and to Sonderborg itself I have said what seems likely to be a last farewell.

COPENHAGEN.

COPENHAGEN, April 26.

Copenhagen, I trust, is not destined to be my Capua. Yet I own frankly, that I never felt so much sympathy for Hannibal's soldiers as I do at the present moment. If their campaigns through Italy bore any resemblance to that of Alsen, I cannot find it in my heart to blame them if they did linger in the first habitable city it was their fortune to enter. Sieges are all very pleasant to read of, and bombardments look well in print. But I doubt whether—with the exception of the sieges which Uncle Toby conducted with the help of Corporal Trim, and which the Widow Wadman look at from behind the arbour—anybody who ever took part in a siege, as besieger, besieged, or non-combatant, derived much satisfaction from the spectacle. I know that, as Als faded out of sight, the one predominant feeling in my own mind was that of personal satisfaction. If Sonderborg had

laid in the Isle of Wight instead of that of Als, and I had left the enemy in possession of an English city, I am afraid my feeling would have been much the same. After three months of dirt and discomfort and danger, the prospect of clean linen and good beds and the luxuries of civilised life over-weighed all other reflections. It was some comfort to me to see that even my Danish fellow-travellers were influenced by a like feeling, and that their spirits rose visibly as we got fairly upon our way. That it should have been so may have been very wrong. If so, I can only say, with Mr. Pecksniff, "Poor human nature!"

As it was, the long dreary journey through the night across the island of Fünen, the chill passage of the Great Belt in the grey morning dawn, and the dull, dusty railway ride from Korsør to Copenhagen, were rendered endurable by the thought that every hour was bringing me nearer to the haven where white shirts and warm baths and sleep undisturbed by shells awaited me. The reality, contrary to the ordinary rule of life, fulfilled the expectation. When Faust sold his soul to Mephistopheles, he made a bargain that the fiend should never claim his own till his victim

had tasted such a complete sense of gratification that he could not even desire a change in his existence. The Devil, as all readers of the life-drama are aware, tempted Faust in vain with every seduction of beauty, wealth, honour, passion; and it was only at last, when the lover of Gretchen and Helena was seated one day, after dinner, dozing in an arm-chair in the warm sunlight, that he felt every longing gratified, and uttered the expression of perfect beatitude which was needed to complete the contract. That Goethe had a profound knowledge of mankind I had always known; but how deep the truth of this lesson was I had never appreciated till the other morning, when, on my return from Alsen, I sat down at the breakfast-table of the Hotel d'Angleterre at Copenhagen, with a pile of English newspapers before me, clean, washed, shaved, and warm.

Pleasant, however, as Copenhagen is to me now by the force of contrast, I should doubt its being a lively town at any time. It has the indescribable look of a city which has outlived its past greatness. Of all times, too, the present is probably the least favourable for seeing the capital of Denmark. An air of general depression

is visible everywhere. The disaster of Dybbol has brought the war home to the Copenhageners, as I suspect it never was brought before. Yesterday, for the first time, an estimate of the loss on the 18th was placarded on the walls; and that was in the form of a statement from a German newspaper, according to which the total Danish loss, in killed, wounded, missing, and prisoners, was five thousand five hundred. Now this loss, great in itself, is all the more important from the smallness of the country. The Danish army is raised from every class; and between five and six thousand men cannot be taken from a little kingdom, numbering in its present limits not more than a million and a half of inhabitants, without the blow striking with more or less force upon every family in the land. The whole life of Denmark, too, is centred in the metropolis to an unfortunate degree, and therefore every man of any station in the army, wherever his home may have been, is certain to have had relations with Copenhagen. Even amongst the small circle of acquaintances which I, as a stranger, have now in this city, I cannot go anywhere without hearing some story of a private grief or

sorrow caused by the great national calamity. There is a sad monotony in the details that I am told. The poor young lieutenant, of whom I wrote to you the other day, who was killed on board the "Rolf Krake," has, I find, left a widowed mother, now childless, to mourn his death. Major Schau, who was reported dead, is still alive, but has just had his leg amputated, and lies dangerously ill. This officer, whom I have met constantly at Sonderborg, was the last of seven sons, whose parents still live. Five were killed in the former war, one in the present campaign, and the last now lies maimed, wounded, and, it may be, dying. So I might repeat to you story after story of like import; but it is the same in all wars; and there are German homes left desolate, doubtless, as well as Danish ones.

I have been present to-day at the funeral of Major Rosen, whose name I must have often mentioned to you. My acquaintance with him was only that of a stranger. I had occasion many times to interrupt him, on matters connected with my duties as a correspondent, at periods when I have no doubt he was overpowered with the pressing cares of his office. Let me bear tes-

timony to the uniform courtesy and consideration with which he received me, as I believe he did every stranger who sought his assistance. His pale, worn, somewhat stern face, with the clear marked features, and the scanty brown hair falling loosely about his high narrow forehead, rises before me as I write. He was a man, I think, few would have ventured to take a freedom with, and none would have hesitated to ask for a kindness. Everybody respected him, and those who knew him loved him. A Holsteiner by birth and breeding, he was faithful to the losing cause ; and the same unselfish loyalty was the cause of his death. On the 18th, in obedience to his duty, he was in a place of comparative shelter on the hill-side of Dybbol. When, however, he saw from his shelter that General Du Plat had been struck down, he rushed out upon the open road to lift up his fallen comrade, and fell instantly by his side, wounded to death. A large crowd of soldiers and citizens assembled yesterday to witness his funeral at the Holmen's Kirke. Of spectacle there was very little. The Danes have even less power than we have ourselves of organising imposing processions ; but there were crowds

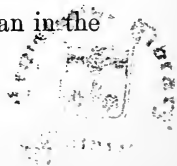
of mourners, and many tears. His coffin, decked out with garlands of the first flowers of that spring he had just lived to see, was carried through the streets of Copenhagen, preceded by a company of soldiers, and followed by a long train of carriages. In the quiet cemetery outside the town the procession ended its sad journey. There, by the newly-dug grave, the flowers were taken from the hearse, the sword and crosses and medals were removed from the velvet cushion, placed upon the top of the bier, on which they lay, and the coffin was lowered into the trench dug for it. The solemn words were said; the dust was thrown upon the coffin, and struck it with the dull, hollow sound which, once heard, is not soon forgotten. The chief mourner, the late major's son—a child of some six years old—was led up to the bank, and peeped down timidly and wonderingly into the grave; and then all was over. To-morrow there is to be a military funeral, at which the different trades unions of the city are to assemble; and for many days to come such spectacles will be familiar to the streets of Copenhagen.

April 28.

I once had the honour to meet a great Italian exile who had just returned to his country after long years of absence. I asked him, I recollect, about his future plans, and whether he intended to take up his home in the land of his birth. "No," he answered; "I want to get away as soon as possible, for on my return I see nothing but graves on every side." So, I think, a Danish soldier, coming back to Copenhagen at this moment, might well hurry away again, saying that he also saw nothing but coffins here. Every day witnesses the burial of soldiers who have fallen in the war, and the sight of the long sad processions marching through the dull quiet streets has become so common a one, that it attracts but little notice. Sir Walter Scott's father, whose great delight was to attend funerals as an amateur mourner, would have been in his element at Copenhagen. For my own part, I cannot work upon my feelings so as to get affected about the death of individuals whose very names were unknown to me. I see that other foreigners, who knew, if possible, less about the dead than I

do myself, are affected at these ceremonies even to tears ; so I suppose the absence of emotion is some defect in my moral nature. An American gentleman who was present at one of the recent public funerals in Copenhagen remarked to a friend of mine that, "when he saw people crying, he did feel somehow as if he belonged to another congregation;" and in this respect I agree with his sentiments. As a rule, therefore, I keep away from spectacles of this kind, and yesterday I contented myself with seeing the great procession, which accompanied the bodies of the officers fallen at Dybbol to the grave, defile past the windows of a house where I had obtained standing room, without following it to the cemetery. I do not know that I missed much by so doing, except that I should wish to have witnessed the scene which concluded it. The King, as I think I mentioned to you, walked at the head of the procession, close behind the flower-clad coffins, bowing slowly from time to time in answer to the silent salutations which greeted him along his path. After the coffins were lowered into their graves, he spoke a few words of sympathy to the chief mourners who followed the different hearses, and then was about

to leave, when he caught sight of a poor woman in deep mourning standing by a common soldier's grave, and weeping bitterly. He turned round at once, left his suite, took the woman, after the German fashion, by both her hands, held them in his, and asked her name kindly, while the tears poured down his own cheeks. There could be no doubt about the genuineness of his emotion, and the dense crowd which surrounded the place of burial made way at once for the King, and greeted him, as he passed out, with a respectful silence, more eloquent, I think, than any cheers. His Majesty looked worn, sad, and prematurely aged; and all who come into contact with him tell me that the events of the war have agitated him deeply. At his accession he was not popular in Copenhagen. The faults of Frederick VIII. were of a nature which a people pardons easily; and his merits were of the class to be valued, perhaps, above their real value. Christian IX. is not a soldier-king like his predecessor; he has not the rough simple frankness of manner which made Frederick VIII. in very truth, and not in courtly phrase, the "well-beloved" of his subjects; and, above all, he was more than half a German in the



eyes of the people who had accepted him reluctantly as their sovereign. But, during the troubled months of his sad reign, the conviction seems gradually to have forced itself upon the Danes that he is faithful and honest, at any rate, to the cause of Denmark, and that he has made their country, their fortunes, and their cause, his own. The community of calamity has already endeared him to the Danes; and I believe his hold upon the nation is stronger now than when he first ascended the throne of Denmark.

But, apart from the constant spectacle of these funeral processions, the aspect of the town of Copenhagen is very gloomy at the present day. With the approach of summer the self-imposed mourning for the late King has been laid aside, and coloured dresses and ribbon-bedecked bonnets are again to be seen about the streets. Unfortunately, the public loss has been succeeded by a thousand private ones, and the number of people you see wearing mourning in Copenhagen is fearfully large. In private society there is naturally no great gaiety. The theatres are open nightly, and are well attended. The Bier-Kellers, too, and Cafés Chantants, the Vauxhalls, and Walhallas,

and Alhambras, and Tivolis, for which the city is famous, are opening for the summer, and seem, if their placards may be believed, to be doing a good business. But otherwise, amusement there is none. How much of this dulness is due to the circumstances of the hour, how much to the normal condition of the city, I cannot judge. My impression is that at the best the capital of Denmark is not a lively residence. It is not, I should think, what advertising builders call an "improving locality." I see but little building going on anywhere, and the town already looks too large for its population. From the window of the room where I am writing I look out upon the great central square of the town, the Kongen's Nytor. The broad, open space, though this is the busiest time of the day, is only dotted over with half-a-dozen carriages and a hundred or so of foot passengers. Street railway cars, which look as if they had been imported direct from New York or Philadelphia, run across the square; and even the most obstinate of Copenhagen Conservatives could not, I think, object that there is any traffic for them to interfere with. The docks and quays are but poorly filled with shipping; the fashionable

quarters of the town are so lifeless, that the streets of Belgravia in the deadest season of the London year would seem crowded in comparison. In the commercial parts of the city there are people enough going to and fro ; but the number of carts or carriages is still very insignificant. The shops are small and shabby, and have that nondescript *omnium gatherum* character which in other countries is only visible in provincial towns of little importance. Every article you see exhibited for sale is either imported or of second-rate quality. Money, I think, must be burning very hotly indeed in your pockets to induce you to spend much of it here. The foreign residents in Copenhagen whom I have met with complain one and all that there is little society at any time, and that, to such as there is, access for strangers is impossible. Personally I have found the Danes so wonderfully hospitable, that I doubt the truth of the latter assertion ; and, moreover, I have observed that a similar complaint is always made in every capital it has ever been my lot to visit. The former statement I can readily believe. During the last fifteen years Denmark has been going through a social revolution. The free institutions introduced

by the late King transferred the government from the hands of the aristocratic classes into those of the bourgeoisie. Since that time the old ruling class has lived apart in dudgeon, while the new one has not yet accommodated itself to its altered position. Very much, too, of the social life of a little capital like this depends upon the court. The peculiar tastes and the matrimonial relation of Frederick VIII. practically put a stop to all court society; while the new dynasty has entered on its career amidst circumstances which have in themselves precluded all idea of such entertainments.

April 29.

Another day has passed, and still we have no news that the hoped-for armistice has been concluded. Yet we seem to be drifting towards peace. This morning I received intelligence that the evacuation of Fredericia and Alsen had been definitely decided upon, and that the decision was being carried out as fast as possible. This evening, small handbills hawked about the streets informed the public that Fredericia had been abandoned.

For the last three days the evacuation of this fortress has been carried on with much secrecy, and finally only a small garrison was left in the place, under the command of Colonel Nielsen, who had instructions to quit the position as soon as an attack was apprehended. Yesterday afternoon the Germans appeared in force on the shores of the Belt, and drove in the Danish outposts. As it seemed probable the assault would have been made to-day, Colonel Nielsen resolved to withdraw the garrison, and at half-past eleven last night the Danes finally evacuated the fortress, without being disturbed in their retreat. It seems doubtful, from the official account, whether the guns were saved. We are told in vague terms that "the most important part of the war material was carried off, the cannon spiked, and the ammunition either removed or destroyed;" from which statement, I suspect that much of the artillery must have fallen into the hands of the enemy. It is not known positively that the Germans have occupied the deserted fortress, but there can be little doubt that this is already the case. The intelligence has cast an additional gloom over the city; but, so far, there has been no exhibition of any popular in-

dignation. The night is, fortunately, cold and rainy, so that few people are about.

May 1.

The month of May opened with a heavy fall of snow, which has only slowly melted away beneath the hot sunlight of midday. The climate is obviously uncertain whether it ought to consider itself summer or winter, and the country is equally uncertain whether it is to regard the condition of affairs as one of peace or war. The truth is, that Denmark—not, I grant, by her own fault, but by the necessities of her position—has fallen into that state of mind immortalised by Wilkins Micawber, when a man lives on for years, amidst increasing embarrassments, trusting always that something will turn up. Persons whose lot has thrown them into contact in private life with men inspired with this belief, must have observed with what an unreasoning faith its devotees cling to the idea that some unforeseen stroke of fortune is to relieve them from their difficulties, how resolutely they refuse to look facts in the face, and how confidently they trust that somebody or other must be forthcoming to pull them out of the ditch. I was once ac-

quainted with a gentleman who, having a good deal less than nothing, married a lady whose pecuniary assets were likewise represented by a negative quantity. When remonstrated with on the imprudence of his conduct, he remarked, after deep reflection, that there must be somebody amongst his connections who could not let him starve. Now, it is the curse of small States that they necessarily look to others for support. Denmark has shown vigour and energy and resolution enough of her own. She has helped herself; but, contrary to the French proverb, Heaven has not helped her in return. In what I say, therefore, I must not be understood as imputing want of manliness to the Danes. All I say is, that, being by the force of circumstances dependent upon others, they have learnt to entertain an indefinite faith that something will be done by somebody to help them at the last moment. Had it not been for this belief, their gallant but useless resistance would never have been undertaken. Were it not for this delusion, there would be no prospect of the war being still carried on now that all hope is lost. That such a prospect does exist is, I fear, possible.

In a military point of view, the fortunes of Denmark seem well nigh desperate, and it is hard to see how the Danes can reject any terms on which an armistice may be offered them. The war party here seem to be hardly alive to the real position of affairs, and talk as if it were still in their power to carry on hostilities, and reduce Germany to reason by the pressure of a blockade. Even supposing that the blockade of half a dozen Prussian ports could really do much damage to a great inland country like Prussia, whose commerce finds its chief exit through Hamburg, the Rhine and Belgium, I do not think the Danes could be allowed to carry out their purpose. Prussia now holds Jutland, the wealthiest of the Danish provinces, in her possession; and if she chooses she can cross over into Fünen. Should it come to a question of exhaustion, the occupation of Jutland and Schleswig, not to mention Fünen, will wear out the Danes much more rapidly than the blockade of Königsberg or Stettin will wear out the Prussians. These reflections are so obvious, that the good sense of the Danish people cannot fail to perceive their force. The war-at-any-price party has already brought calamities enough upon the

country ; but I doubt its having the power, if it have the will, to force on the Government to an insane continuance of a hopeless struggle. At this moment the only thing which can save the country is an armistice ; and the conviction that this is so is a very general and growing one. With the fall of Fredericia the curtain has, it appears, dropped upon the last act of the Schleswig-Holstein campaign. Denmark may say, with the French King after the battle of Pavia, “*Tout est perdu hors l'honneur.*” Her honour is indeed safe, and with that barren consolation she must, I fear, remain contented for the present.

May 3.

Most persons, like myself, who have been in the United States during the Secession war, must have been struck with the fact how very little the immense extent of the country isolated one State from another. At Chicago or Philadelphia, at Boston or St. Louis, separated as these cities are by hundreds or thousands almost of miles, you knew as much or as little about the progress of the war. Here, on the other hand, though the

whole area of the war is not larger than that of one of the smallest of the American States, you are surprised at the extraordinary degree to which the different provinces are separated from each other. Nobody in Alsen knows what is going on in Jutland, or *vice versâ*. Zealand is hardly aware whether Fünen is invaded or not ; and even here, in Copenhagen, the knowledge of how the campaign is faring in the different provinces of the monarchy is of the scantiest. In spite of telegraphs and railroads and steamboats, Denmark is still a confederacy of disjointed states, rather than a homogeneous country. It is necessary, I think, to bear this fact constantly in mind, to understand the nature of the war. Zealand is divided from Fünen by a channel as wide as that of Dover. Fünen, again, except in its north-west corner, is separated from Jutland by straits nearly as broad. Jutland is cut into halves by a broad inland fiord ; and the islands of Alsen, Æroe, Langeland, Lolland, Falster, Moen, Femeren, and the series of minor ones which stud the Baltic Archipelago, are divided from Zealand and the mainland by wide tracts of sea. Thus the communication between the different parts of the monarchy is most im-

perfect, and community of race and language is the only tie which preserves the integrity of the kingdom. Where this tie is wanting, as in Holstein ; or only exists imperfectly, as in Schleswig ; the bond of union must, under the most favourable circumstances, be a very fragile one. The influence of this separation between the different parts of the State is, indeed, very visible at the present moment. An invasion of Ireland would be keenly felt, no doubt, in England, and there is hardly an English family which would not have an individual, as well as a national stake in the issue of the war. Still it would be a very different thing from an invasion of England itself. Now Zealand, with respect to Jutland, or even to Fünen, occupies a very similar position to that which England would occupy towards Ireland, supposing the French landed in Galway, and supposing also it was absolutely impossible that they should cross St. George's Channel. Except under the most improbable contingency that the Austrian fleet should utterly demolish the Danish, and that the Germans should attempt to land an army in Zealand, the island, which contains the seat of government and the political centre of all

Denmark, is as safe from the actual presence of war as Iceland itself. I do not suppose that the contingency of an invasion of Zealand has ever even been contemplated by the Danish Government; it certainly has not been by the people of Copenhagen. In fact, except for the return of the dead and wounded soldiers, the Copenhageners know very little actually about the war. Though the enemy at the furthest point of his progress can be little over a hundred miles away from the capital, less is known about his movements than is known at New York about those of the Confederates in Texas. I once came across a file of old newspapers published in the days when the Jacobite army was marching down on the Midland shires of England. I should have thought beforehand that they would have contained much information as to the progress of the invading hosts, whose victorious march was only stopped in the county next to that in which the news-letter in question was published. I found, however, that the only intelligence given was in the form of an occasional report that a traveller, recently arrived in the town, stated that he had heard the rebels had been seen in some place or

other in a neighbouring shire. If you make allowance for the advance in the means of locomotion and communication during the last century, the Zealand Danes are hardly better informed about the position of the Germans than our forefathers were as to the advance of the Highland clans. Nobody here, for instance, can tell up to what point the Germans have penetrated in Jutland, or where the Danish cavalry, under General Hegerman, has taken refuge on the peninsula; whether the Austrians are preparing to cross the Belt from Fredericia, or whether the Prussians have as yet made any demonstration against Alsen. The Government, I think, has no wish to conceal the truth. Indeed, wherever news is known, it seems to me to be published with tolerable promptitude, and certainly with extreme candour. But the Government itself is very imperfectly informed. Statements are published daily from the War Office that all is quiet in Als, or that nothing has happened before Middelfart in Fünen. But that is all. The private scraps of information given by the newspapers are very meagre. An announcement in to-day's papers that "An engagement took place

on Saturday near Bold Wood, in Jutland, between the enemy and some of our troops; that particulars are not yet known, but that it is reported that, without any loss on our side, we took a score of prisoners," may be taken as a fair sample of the items of intelligence conveyed to the Copenhagen public by the press. The Government acts perhaps wisely in concealing the movements of the Danish forces as much as possible; but yet it is strange that, though Fünen is only some five hours' journey from Copenhagen, nobody here not connected with the Administration appears to have any idea what force there is at present collected in the island, or upon what point it is being concentrated.

May 5.

Let me endeavour to explain to you the general nature of the two parties which, for the last sixteen years, have swayed in turn the policy of Denmark.

It would be useless to enter into minute details, whose bearing on the question could only be explained by long disquisitions on the contemporary history of the country. What I wish to explain

are the broad features of difference between the two parties which divide Denmark—the Eider-Danes and the Whole-State men, as they are called respectively. In Denmark—I am speaking now of Denmark proper, not of the Duchies—there is, as in England, no such thing as a foreign party. No faction accuses or even suspects its opponents of being disloyal to the cause of Denmark, or of seeking any object, however mistakenly, except the welfare of the country. No party is supposed to favour Germany, or to seek any change in the dynastic succession. The questions on which the rival camps are at issue are those of domestic government and foreign policy. What renders the politics of Denmark so difficult of comprehension is, that, by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, the question of external policy is inseparably connected for the time with that of internal government. Ever since the accession of the late King, the relations of the Duchies to Denmark have been the absorbing issue of politics; and therefore the two parties have derived their names and their temporary character from the different views they took of the manner in which this issue should be dealt with. Their real char-

acter, however, is derived from that divergence of opinion which separates Liberals and Conservatives in every free constitutional country. From the time the German unity movement came into active existence, it has been admitted by the Danes that Holstein and Lauenburg must, as German States and members of the Confederacy, follow the fortunes of the Fatherland. Granted this fact, the question arose how their relations to Denmark ought to be regulated. Speaking broadly, the Whole-State men advocated the view that such concessions should be made as would induce Holstein and Lauenburg to remain contented beneath the rule of Denmark. On the other hand, the Eider-Danes asserted that no possible concession would ever effect the desired objects; that Holstein must be separated from the monarchy, or connected with it at most by such a bond as that which, up to the death of William IV., united Hanover to England; and that the other provinces of the kingdom north of the Eider must be consolidated into one homogeneous Danish country. The difference in theory between the two factions was not unlike that between the advocates of State rights and centralised government under the

American Union. The Whole-State party recommended the policy of separate local administrations for each of the four great divisions of the monarchy, Holstein, Schleswig, Jutland, and the islands, with a central government at Copenhagen, whose jurisdiction should extend only to matters of common national import. The Eider-Danes wished to have one government only; and as Holstein could not possibly be comprehended in any arrangement of this kind, they proposed to detach it from the rest of the monarchy. Of course, in each party there were various sections who advocated these conflicting views with more or less obstinacy; and the modes by which each of them sought to carry out their opinions altered according to the circumstances of the day. Still, this divergence of sentiment was the mainspring of the policy which from 1848 downwards has directed the action of the Whole-State men and the Eider-Danes respectively. Looking on the question in the abstract, the views of the former party were the wisest and most statesmanlike; practically, however, there were many considerations which threw the power, not unreasonably, into the hands of their opponents.

The final cause, as metaphysicians would call it, of this war is, as I have always tried to impress upon my readers, not one of rival dynastic pretensions, or of internal government, or even directly of Prussian desires of aggrandisement, but of conflicting and hostile nationalities. The question which has agitated Europe so long comes, when you divest it of all accidental features, simply to this: Is the Cimbrian peninsula to belong to Germans or Danes?—is the ruling nationality in the peninsula to be Scandinavian or Teutonic? Now, if no change had occurred in the course of events, there can be little question how this struggle would have ended. It would be entering on too wide a subject to consider the influences which operated in favour of the German party. But this much may be asserted without fear of contradiction, even from the Danes themselves, that up to the end of the last century Denmark was rapidly becoming Germanised. German was the language of all educated people, and in the Duchies was the official language of the country. During the first quarter, however, of the present century, there was a national reaction in favour of Scandinavianism, owing partly to social, still more to political causes.

The Germans tried to pull the apple off the tree before it was ripe, and the Danes awoke to the consciousness of the fact that the Teutonic tendency of their culture, society, and government was likely to prove fatal to their national existence. An attempt was made to undo the work of the past, and to re-establish the supremacy of the Danish element in the State. This attempt secured the support of all the energy, talent, and patriotism in the country, and the advance of Germanism, as it was styled, was retarded, if not checked. A new generation sprang up, imbued with Danish culture, ideas, traditions, and aspirations, and prepared to sacrifice almost anything to the maintenance of a distinct Danish nationality. The late King was perhaps the most ardent adherent of this movement, and he might well be taken as the representative man of the Scandinavian party. It is not difficult to understand how this anti-German tendency worked in favour of the Eider-Dane policy. The only way to form a Whole-State was to allow something like autonomy to the Duchies. With such autonomy the Germanisation of Schleswig was a mere question of time. If Holstein, on the other hand, were separated from

the monarchy, and Schleswig incorporated with the purely Danish provinces, it was at any rate conceivable that all Denmark, north of the Eider, might be made in course of time a purely Danish State. Thus arose the apparent anomaly that a party eminently patriotic, and whose sole "*raison d'être*" was the maintenance of the integrity of the country, based its policy upon the surrender of the richest and most important province of the monarchy. To draw a metaphor from a common proverb, I may say the Eider-Danes considered that half a loaf of purely Danish bread was better than a whole loaf of mixed Danish and German ; and in this view they were supported by the united strength of the national reaction against Germanism.

The relations of the two parties were further complicated by the divergence of their wishes about internal government. Up to the death of Christian VIII., Denmark was ruled by an absolute Government, despotic rather in name than in fact, and under which the different provinces enjoyed great local independence. When constitutional government was established in Denmark by Frederick VII., on his accession in 1848, there

were naturally two domestic parties in the country. The Liberals desired democratic institutions; the Conservatives wished to preserve as much as possible of the old despotic system. Now it so happened that Holstein and Schleswig were much more aristocratic in their institutions, sympathies, and tendencies than the provinces of Denmark proper. Any form of constitution, therefore, which was based upon the Whole-State system and preserved the local autonomy of the Duchies, must necessarily be much less democratic than a system based upon the principle of extending to all the States north of the Eider the same institutions as those desired by the island Danes, and more especially by the Copenhageners. In consequence, the aristocratic party and the adherents of the old absolutist system espoused the Whole-State policy, while the Liberals identified themselves with the Eider-Dane platform.

Thus it came to pass that the national aspirations of the Scandinavian party and the democratic movement of young Denmark both worked in favour of the Eider-Dane policy, which had also the support of the King himself; and, as a rule, this party has, up to the present time, directed

the destinies of the country. But yet their victory is not so permanently secured as might be supposed at first sight. Constitutional government, it should be remembered, was given to the nation by the King, not wrung from the King by the nation. There was no wide-spread national dissatisfaction with the old state of things, and the character of the movement which made Denmark a free country was not unlike that which established the short-lived constitutions of Germany in 1848. The chief leaders of the movement here, as in Germany, were the educated middle classes, the professors, and the officials. Fortunately, the country was so prosperous and contented that it contained little, if anything, of the revolutionary and socialistic element which ruined the cause of free government in the Fatherland; while the practical common-sense of the Danish people preserved them from the extravagances into which the German Liberals fell blindly. Moreover, the King, instead of working underhand against the new order of things, like his German brother sovereigns, sought loyally and honestly to carry out the system of constitutionalism. The change has worked well; the country has made rapid

progress in liberty and prosperity ; and free institutions have steadily gained ground in Denmark. But still nations, like individuals, never value what has been given to them so much as what they have earned for themselves. An agricultural country, such as Denmark, occupied almost exclusively by small landed proprietors and peasants, is always conservative in its instincts ; there exists undoubtedly, even in the purely Danish provinces, a good deal of jealousy against the preponderance which a centralised democratic Government has given to Copenhagen and the islands on which it stands ; and, until the hour of trial comes, it is difficult even for native politicians to say what amount of hold the constitutional form of government has acquired upon the rural districts.

From the causes which I have endeavoured to indicate as briefly as I could, the question of constitutional freedom is associated almost inextricably with the Eider-Dane policy, and its corollary, the maintenance of the November constitution. Now up to the present hour that policy has been a failure. The net result is, that the whole peninsula is occupied by Germany, that the Duchies seem almost irretrievably lost, that the army is well

nigh destroyed, and that Fünen, if not Zealand, lies at the mercy of the invaders, Whether any other policy could have produced a different or a less disastrous result is a matter on which it is hard to form an opinion. The result, however, is unfortunately patent, and the party to whose policy this result is immediately due bears, not unjustly, the responsibility of the failure. There is no doubt that the policy which dictated the declaration of war, and the gallant though hopeless resistance of the Danes, was the one which commanded the support of the vast majority of the nation. Still it is possible that public opinion may change, and the organs of the Eider-Dane party—the *Dagblad* and the *Fædreland*—appear to me nervously alarmed lest this should prove to be the case. The capture of Dybbøl, with the practical loss of half the army, has produced an immense effect throughout the country; and the organs of the aristocratic and Conservative factions declare openly that the Eider-Dane policy has been the ruin of the country. It is natural enough, therefore, the Danish Liberals should resent bitterly the imputation that the army was sacrificed to popular clamour; and the fact that the state-

ment has too much truth in it renders it all the more offensive.

May 11.

The concluding chapters of a novel are always flat and wearisome. When you know the end, when even the least experienced of novel-readers can guess the "dénouement," you turn over the leaves impatiently. Whether the heroine dies broken-hearted, or terminates the romance of life by a happy union with the object of her affections, it makes no difference. The consummation is foreseen, and the details of the process can command but scanty interest. For the last three weeks my readers, as I have been painfully aware, have been perusing the last pages of the story it has been my duty to describe as narrator. If I have told my story intelligibly, those who read it must long ago have known what was to be the ending. With the capture of Dybbol and the overwhelming calamity which befel the Danish arms on that fatal April morning, the unequal contest between Denmark and Germany was virtually ended. The crisis had come, and there could be no further question as to the termination.

The spectacle of the period which has elapsed between the loss of Dybbol and the conclusion of the armistice has been a very painful one to all who cannot avoid sympathising with the heroism of a gallant people. Further resistance was obviously impossible, and yet the Danes could not make up their minds to the fact that all was over. Everybody knew that the acceptance of an armistice on the terms dictated by the victorious enemy had become inevitable, and yet nobody liked to acknowledge the necessity. Men hoped against hope that the exorbitant character of the demands put forward by Germany might induce the neutral Powers to interfere actively on behalf of Denmark, and, faint as this hope was known to be, it was too precious to be abandoned. To be what I recollect hearing Garibaldi promised Italy should be, on the day when he addressed the crowd gathered to welcome him on his entry into Naples, "*padrone in casa sua*"—master of one's own destiny—is surely the greatest blessing that a nation can enjoy. There may be advantages in the existence of small States; but nothing, I think, can compensate to their inhabitants for the dependence upon foreign Powers to which, how-

ever brave and heroic, they are virtually subjected. The bare possibility that England and France might go to war for her sake has protracted and embittered the agony of this gallant country. The Danes were afraid of owning to the world, or even to themselves, that the time had come to submit to force, for fear that such an admission might extinguish the last prospect of foreign aid. So they have gone on since the fall of Dybbol, to repeat an expression I have used before, drifting into peace. First they were confident—or I should rather say professed to be confident—that Fredericia would be defended to the last; then, that a stand would be made in North Jutland; and, finally, that the war by sea would be maintained at all hazards. Illusion after illusion has had to be abandoned, and at last the end has come.

The Government has reflected faithfully enough the indecision of the people. I have never disguised my conviction that a suspension of hostilities had become unavoidable, and that, as the Germans would most certainly refuse to permit the continuance of the blockade while Fünen lay practically within their grasp, the blockade would

have to be raised. I was assured on every side that such a proposition could not be entertained. On this day week the official journal, the "Berlingske Tidende," contained an assertion that no armistice could be accepted which involved the cessation of the blockade; and later in the week, this assertion, as I know, was confirmed verbally by the Ministers themselves. On Monday, however, there were rumours current that the Government had given way, and on that evening I learnt privately that the report was true. Even then, however, disbelief in the conclusion of a truce was expressed in official circles. It was said the Government had reason to know that Prussia was resolved on prosecuting the war, and that the only motive of Denmark's making these concessions was to place Germany more completely in the wrong in the probable event of fresh difficulties being raised. Whether this belief was seriously entertained, or whether it was merely put forward in order to break the suddenness of the change of policy, I cannot say. This I know, that, in spite of these rumours, there was no expectation yesterday morning of the news which arrived in the afternoon. A despatch was received about noon

at the Foreign Office, but it was so confused that its purport was doubtful. Later in the day, however, a private telegram was forwarded to the Exchange, and then it became known, by an official announcement, that the war was over and the defeat acknowledged.

Any fears that may have been entertained as to the manner in which the news would be received at Copenhagen have proved utterly groundless. Up to this afternoon there has been no public demonstration of any kind, and no manifestation whatever of popular feeling. Indeed, the predominant feeling for the moment is one of relief. It is a comfort, at any rate, to know the worst; and the blow struck at Dybbol is still too fresh in the remembrance of the people for any measure which stops the progress of the invasion to be absolutely unwelcome. Even the Opposition papers hardly question for the time the wisdom of the decision at which the Ministry has arrived. When the urgency of the immediate necessity is forgotten, it is probable that a different state of feeling will set in. The terms of the armistice are bitterly mortifying to the Danes. It is believed that this is not a mere suspension, but a

virtual abandonment, of the war. As the “Dagblag” of to-day remarks, with truth, “the Government will not be able to resist the extension of an armistice on the same terms as those on which it has consented to its conclusion; and the whole burden of these terms falls on Denmark.” In truth, with the one single exception that the island of Alsen is preserved under Danish rule, it is hard to see what the Danes gain beyond the broad fact of peace. Fredericia is taken, Jutland is occupied by German troops, and the pressure upon German commerce—the one weapon on whose ultimate efficacy Denmark relied confidently to the last—is thrown aside. Nothing can be better for the designs of Prussia than the maintenance of the *status quo*; hardly anything could be less favourable for the hopes of the Danes. The paramount object of securing an armistice was, doubtless, worth any sacrifice, but still the sacrifice made is a fearfully heavy one. If the Government could have consented to raise the blockade immediately upon the fall of Dybbol, it is probable that an armistice might have been obtained without the loss of Fredericia or the occupation of Jutland; and when the Rigsraad

meets—supposing that ill-fated body is ever destined to assemble—the conduct of the Ministry is likely to be severely canvassed.

However, whether wisely or not, the bargain has been struck, and the Danes have set about fulfilling their share of the contract with their usual loyalty. Yesterday, as soon as the news arrived, a fast steamer was despatched to Jutland to stop the movements of General Hegerman, and this morning a decree has been published notifying that the blockade of the Prussian and Schleswig-Holstein ports will be raised to-morrow. In a day or two the whole line of communication between Kiel and Korsöer is to be re-established, and the Danish cruisers will be recalled as speedily as possible.

Happily, the last incident of the war has been one gratifying to the Danes, after a long series of mortifications. On the day on which the armistice was concluded, a naval engagement took place in the North Sea, within sight of Heligoland, between a Danish and Austrian squadron. As you will learn the details from Hamburg long before we know them in Copenhagen, it is no use my repeating the confused reports we have received here of

the vessels engaged, and the amount of loss. The only thing which appears certain is that the Austrians were driven back, with one of their ships in flames, and that the victory was on the side of the Danes. The news of the battle and the armistice arrived here together, and the former somewhat broke the disappointment that the latter had caused.

THE END.





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